

Tests

DISHWASHERS
SET-TOP BOXES
NAPPIES
MULTITOOLS
MARMALADE

CHOICE

Independent information for smart consumers

PETROL & OIL ADDITIVES

Do they live up
to their claims?

FIND THE BEST HAIR CONDITIONER

GI FACTS

No excuse to eat
more ice cream



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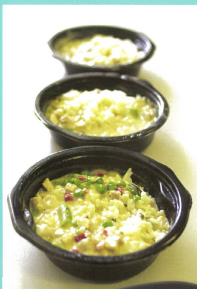
FROZEN MEALS

PORTABLE DVD
PLAYERS

MOBILE PHONE
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FRIDGES

20 cm COOK'S
KNIVES



this month online

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Dishwashers

For a limited time, personal CHOICE subscribers have access to our interactive Compare-a-dishwasher tool. Use it to find a dishwasher that'll be the best for you.

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Broader focus on money and rights

This month every CHOICE subscriber also received a free copy of our new magazine, *CHOICE Money & Rights*. The

launch of this publication will let the Consumers' Association expand our coverage of issues where consumers are particularly vulnerable and need truly independent information.

The first edition of *CHOICE Money & Rights* investigates mortgage brokers and rental car contracts. It exposes major deficiencies in both industries.

Mortgage brokers often fail to give consumers even basic information and they don't always deliver the amazing deals they promise in their advertisements.

CHOICE Money & Rights also found rental car contracts containing nasty clauses that could disadvantage the consumer. We're calling for urgent regulation as a result of our investigation.

The new magazine also reports on super, growth pensions, car insurance, debt collection practices and the corporate governance performance of Australia's top companies.

Without *CHOICE Money & Rights* it would take us six months to find enough pages in CHOICE to deliver that range and depth of information. At last we can 'up the ante' on Australia's lawmakers and financial services providers. We now have six dedicated full-time writers and researchers scrutinising financial and legal issues.

That gives us the capacity to produce over 200 more magazine pages of information each year. It also enables us to expand our online content, with more interactive tools and calculators to help you make sense of the hundreds of credit, savings and investment products available.

CHOICE Money & Rights also continues our strong tradition of providing truly independent reporting.

If you'd like to subscribe to the new magazine, you'll find a subscription form attached to its cover.

Jane Mackenzie, Editor



Call 1300 360 655
and let us shop for you

All you need is the model name and number you want to buy, the price you want to beat, and your CHOICE subscriber number (from the mailing label with the magazine). CHOICE Shopper is available personal subscribers only.

CONTENTS

April 2004

COVER STORY

9 Good carbs, bad carbs

Do we really need to worry about the GI (glycaemic index) of what we eat, or is it just another food fad?

Photo: Getty Images

REPORTS

8 What not to buy for Mother's Day

Which kitchen gadgets and personal care doodads readers find really useful — or useless.

14 Petrol and oil additives

They make big claims but do they live up to them?

32 You can't take it with you ...

But if you die without making a will you won't know where all your assets end up.

TESTS

18 Getting hair into condition

Our Home Testers pick the best from 39 conditioners.

22 Multitools

The ultimate boys' toy — and some of them are useful too.

26 Across the breakfast table

Some orange marmalades are less than 10% real oranges.

28 Happy with nappies?

Which are the best disposables? Plus the cloth vs disposables debate.

40 Digital set-top boxes

They're the cheaper route into digital TV, so which models are best?

44 Dishwashers: update

Four out of five new models rate well.

REGULARS

4 Choice Cuts

7 Your Letters

35 Food Bites: Making the best cheese sandwich; Domino's reduced-fat mozzarella

36 Consumer Bookshelf

39 Hip Pocket: Financial services licences now here; getting bank fees waived

48 Recalls and bans

50 About CHOICE

51 CHOICE Index: May 2003 — April 2004

52 The Hard Word

9



22



28

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New national phone service for reporting side effects

Side effects and adverse reactions to medicines are common. They're mostly mild, such as a skin rash or temporary nausea, but in a small percentage of cases side effects can be serious — or even life-threatening. According to a report from the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care, an estimated 2–3% of hospital admissions each year (about 140,000) are because of so-called adverse medicine events.

Now, reports *CHOICE Health Reader*, there's a new phone service that allows someone who's suffered — or thinks they have — side effects from medication to report or get information about it.

It's a good way to find out if the side effect is serious and whether you should see your doctor about changing medication. Furthermore, the information gathered by the service will be used to make recommendations to doctors and pharmacists as to which medications are safe and which aren't.

The service is called the Consumer Adverse Medicine Events Line, and the number is 1300 134 237 (toll-free, 9 am–6 pm AEST).

Also in March *Health Reader*:

■ A New Zealand study of car colour and serious crashes found that, in terms of the chance of having a serious crash, silver cars were safest and brown cars the least safe. The researchers didn't offer any clue as to why the colour of a car should affect its safety performance — perhaps people who buy silver cars have more cautious personalities?

■ Still on the topic of car crashes... While the dangers of drink-driving are well known (driving with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.06% doubles the risk of an accident), people seem less concerned about phone-driving. A Melbourne study observing drivers in traffic found almost 2% of drivers were using mobile phones. Driving while using a mobile increases the risk of a traffic accident by up to four times, and some research has already shown that hands-free phoning isn't any safer.

If you'd like to subscribe to *CHOICE Health Reader*, call 1800 069 552, go to www.choice.com.au/magazines, or see page 49.

Green claims misleading

Late last year, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) cracked down on Sanyo Airconditioning Australia (a separate legal entity from Sanyo Australia) for "false, misleading and deceptive representations" in the advertising of its range of ECO Multi Series air conditioners.

The company had claimed in its brochures that these air conditioners contained "environmentally friendly" refrigerant gases and hence the air conditioners were for "a new ozone era — keeping the world green".

The court found that one gas used was known to be an ozone-depleting substance in addition to contributing to global warming, and the other also contributed to global warming. The court concluded that neither gas benefited the environment.

Following ACCC referral of the matter to the Federal Court, Sanyo Airconditioning Australia was found to have contravened the Trade Practices Act. The court ordered the company not to engage in similar misleading conduct in its future promotional activities.

Heater test: new approach

As of this year, we've changed our approach to heater testing. We're currently finalising a test of 2.4 kW electric oil-filled column heaters. The test samples were sourced from distributors' warehouses in February, which means we were able to include models released this year that should still be widely available after publication.

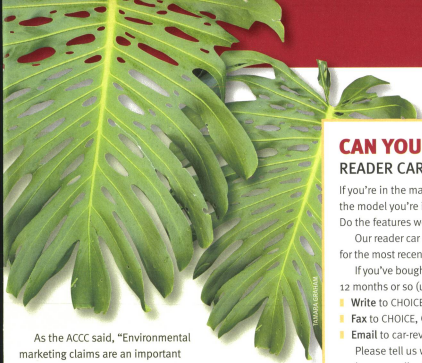
The downside: we won't be able to publish the results in *CHOICE* until the June issue. However, they'll be available on *CHOICE Online*, and also free to personal *CHOICE* subscribers on *CHOICEextra*, by late April/early May.

In the past, we brought you test results for heaters earlier in the heating season — usually in April or May *CHOICE*. As heaters aren't available in retail outlets until about that time, and often don't even make it into distributors' warehouses until February, this was only possible because we bought our test samples at the end of the heating season the year before.

Of course we tried to make sure we only included models whose distributor claimed they'd be available in the next season. However, quite regularly models



SHARON GRAYSON



TAMARA KERRILL

As the ACCC said, "Environmental marketing claims are an important marketing tool in the air conditioning industry, as well as in other industries. In light of the court's orders, extra care should be taken by businesses intending to promote the environmental aspects of their products or services to accurately specify the environmental benefits claimed."

We agree, and when we next look at air conditioners (or any other relevant products) we'll be keeping an eye out for dubious environmental claims.



JESSICA MARSHALL

would be discontinued after all, or there were only very few samples left in the new heating season and the model sold out very quickly.

This wasn't an ideal situation for several reasons:

- We wasted money buying and testing models we couldn't report on.

- We recommended models that sold out quickly and left some of you frustrated.

- We missed out on models that were released for the new heating season.

For the new test results, go to www.choiceextra.com.au in late April/early May and click on 'column heaters' in the index.



CAN YOU HELP? READER CAR REVIEWS

If you're in the market for a new car, you want as much information as possible on the model you're interested in. How does it perform in different driving situations? Do the features work well? What's it like for space and noise?

Our reader car reviews try to answer these questions (see CHOICE, March 2004, for the most recent one), and we need your help again for the next round of reviews.

If you've bought (**new, not secondhand**) one of the models below within the last 12 months or so (unless otherwise stated), please let us know by April 19, 2004:

- **Write** to CHOICE, Car review, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204.
- **Fax** to CHOICE, Car review, (02) 9577 3377.
- **Email** to car-review@choice.com.au.

Please tell us which of the models you can review for us, when you bought it, and your email address (preferably), fax number or mailing address.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ■ Daewoo Kalos. | ■ Mazda 2. |
| ■ Ford Falcon BA. | ■ Mitsubishi Magna (since 07/03). |
| ■ Holden Commodore VY. | ■ Mitsubishi Mirage. |
| ■ Hyundai Getz. | ■ Toyota Camry V6 (six-cylinder models only). |
| ■ Kia Rio. | ■ Toyota Echo. |

CAN YOU HELP? COCKROACH KILLERS

We're planning a review of products intended to prevent — or, worst case, deal with — cockroach infestations. We'd like to hear from you if you've recently engaged in battle, particularly if you used 'green' methods. But stories about sprays, bombs, baits and traps are welcome too.

Email your experiences to cockroachtreatments@choice.com.au or send them to Cockroach treatments, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204, by the end of April this year. Thanks for your help.

UPDATE: DEAD END MATS

When we tested cockroach killers in 1993 and again in 1999, we found that **DEAD END MATS** were clearly the best of the mat, gel and bait products tested. Our Consumer Services department still often gets asked where you can buy them, as they've been hard to find in supermarkets.

Recently they've become available in Action supermarkets (northern NSW, Queensland and WA). If there's no Action store near you, they're available direct from the manufacturer — call (02) 9521 8961 for more information.

CAN YOU HELP? GLAMOUR PHOTOGRAPHY

We're looking into the area of professional glamour photography — where you're given a spiffy hair-do, a make-up job and perhaps an outfit or costume, and strike a pose for the camera.

If you've been there, we'd like to hear about your experiences. How much did it cost all up? What did this include? Was this what you thought you'd be up for at the outset, or were there hidden costs? Did you find some of the 'extras', such as blow-ups or second prints, more expensive than you'd bargained for? Were you made to feel good, and did you have fun doing it? Were you happy with the results?

Write to us at: Glamour photography, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204, or email glamour@choice.com.au, by the end of April this year. Thank you.

CORRECTION

DISHWASHERS

CHOICE, Jan/Feb 2004

In the table on page 41 we gave the dimensions for the MAYTAG Jetclean MJD2000AAW / MJD3000AAW as 80 x 60 x 60 cm (H x W x D). In fact its height is 85 cm.

Dangerous skin paintings

Henna stains skin and hair red (and, if you're careless, just about anything else), but in fact starts life as a green plant powder, obtained from the leaves of the *Lawsonia inermis* tree. Moslem and Hindu women traditionally paint their hair and skin — usually the palms, soles of the feet and nails — with it.

Temporary henna tattoos, drawn on the skin by street or beach artists, are a popular holiday alternative to the real thing, particularly when on holiday or travelling.

While traditional henna paste is khaki, greenish brown or very dark brownish green, some artists make a black temporary tattoo they call 'black henna', using a synthetic black dye containing para-phenylenediamine (PPD). It accelerates the staining process and allows the artist greater precision. Tattoo artists using black henna operate in popular holiday destinations around the world.

Unfortunately this short-lived novelty can have longer-term consequences than you'd expect: PPD is a potential allergen, which can cause blistering, open sores and scarring. These skin reactions, followed by swelling, start three to 10 days after the tattoo is applied. The allergy is permanent, and you may become cross-sensitised to related substances such as PABA (sometimes found in sunblock). Allergic reactions to traditional henna dyes are extremely rare.

If you're tempted to get a henna tattoo:

- Pay attention to the colour and odour of the mix — look for green or brownish mixtures. If the stuff they're using is jet black and stains the skin quickly, it's probably PPD-based. Traditional henna paste smells like spinach, while 'henna' containing PPD may have a chemical smell, or no obvious odour.
- Ask the artist how long the stain will last. PPD stains typically last more than a week and stay black all the time, while real henna stains last one to three weeks, fading to orange during that period.



TIMARA GRIFFITH

OVER-THE-COUNTER PAINKILLERS

Some people tend to treat OTC painkillers differently from prescription medicines due to their ease of purchase, but it's important to remember they're still drugs, and to use caution when taking them.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has released a factsheet for consumers on the safe use of paracetamol. The main points include:

- Make sure you follow the dosage information on the packaging.
- Don't take more than one medicine at a time that contains paracetamol.
- Make sure you buy the correct strength of paracetamol liquid for the age and weight of a child.
- Don't give paracetamol to children or adolescents for longer than 48 hours except on medical advice.
- Contact the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 or other medical advice if you suspect an overdose may have occurred.

You can find the TGA fact sheet at www.tga.gov.au — click on 'paracetamol' in the A-Z list.

UPDATE

CREDIT FILE BUNGLES

CHOICE, Jan/Feb 2004

The Consumer Credit Legal Service in WA has moved; its new phone number is (08) 9221 7066.

WORLD CONSUMER SNAPSHOT

COMPUTER CASE AS BULLET PROTECTION

In the US, US\$650 can buy you a computer case with a quick-release mechanism for rapid deployment of an antiballistic shield. "Faced with a threat (and presumably ample warning and presence of mind), you're to hold the shield in front of whatever 14 x 30 inch [35 x 75 cm] piece of anatomy you want to protect," reports *Consumer Reports*.

ANTIBACTERIAL PANTYHOSE

After antibacterial cloths and wipes, now come the antibacterial pantyhoose. Our German counterparts came across *Elbeo Deo Fresh* pantyhoose, claimed to protect you from odours and bacteria. The pantyhoose are treated with triclosan, which can kill bacteria but, according to data safety sheets, can also irritate the skin, reports *Test* magazine.

HOW (NOT) TO KEEP CHOCOLATE

When live (and dead) worms were found in a popular chocolate bar in India, the manufacturer blamed dealers and inappropriate storage conditions. So how best do you store chocolate at home, asked India's *Consumer Voice*, and concluded "not at all", after some research. Manufacturers recommend storing chocolate in a cool (around 15°C) and dry place, but during Indian summers (and some Australian ones), when temperatures easily soar to above 30°C inside, it's difficult to create optimum storage conditions. And in the fridge, chocolate can develop a white layer on top (melted cocoa butter that's oozed to the surface, then resolidified) and lose its taste. The moral? You'll just have to eat it.

Car rental hassle

My partner and I often rent cars while travelling interstate. In August 2003 we travelled to Perth and rented a car from a nationwide car rental company.

On picking up the car we were given a detailed speech about inspecting it before we took it and making sure any damage was noted on the inspection form. We were told that we would be responsible for any damage not noted on the inspection form. This was as expected but the speech made us feel uneasy, because it was so detailed.

We did a pre-delivery inspection and found numerous small scratches, pits, and chips not listed on the form. We added this damage to the inspection form.

During the time we had the car, no new damage occurred, and before returning it we carefully checked the car against the inspection report.

When we returned it, we went out of our way to deliver it back to the depot, rather than just leaving it at the airport. We also asked a staff member to check the vehicle, which he did

without us present. He confirmed, verbally, that it was OK (or words to that effect).

A week or so later, our credit card was charged with a \$65 fee and a few weeks later we received a letter with an invoice for the above amount for damage to the front bumper.

There was no such damage when we dropped the car off but we couldn't prove it. Given the amount involved we didn't complain — we knew it would be fruitless.

In fact, \$65 was about the difference between this company's rental charge and its more expensive competitors. And we wonder just what \$65 buys in terms of car repair?

Besides, the car already had many small areas of damage which had not been repaired prior to us renting it.

Con Tzerefos
Via internet

Unfortunately, Con's story isn't an isolated one. When we researched consumers' difficulties with car rentals, we uncovered a litany of common and frustrating problems. See the report in your complimentary copy of our new CHOICE Money & Rights magazine to find out how you can avoid the potential traps of car rental.

Not the full warranty?

My husband was given a **SUNBEAM** sandwich press for his birthday in August last year. The handle cracked earlier this month and I returned it to the place of purchase as the appliance came with a 12-month replacement guarantee.

SUNBEAM duly replaced the sandwich maker, no questions asked — but the replacement doesn't come with its own 12-month warranty.

I was told by the retailer that it's the manufacturer's policy that a replacement only carries the remainder of the warranty on the original purchase. What happens if this appliance breaks down after the expiry of the original warranty?

THUMBS UP!



■ Sue Woodward, via internet, awards a thumbs-up to **RIP CURL** Torquay, Victoria. Her son's wetsuit got badly torn after it was caught in his bike peddle. **RIP CURL** not only rang when they received the suit and repaired it the same day, but also sent it back express post at no cost.

I think the replacement should come with its own full warranty, as it's a new product. What if it develops the same problem as the original one in seven months' time (when the original warranty will have expired)?

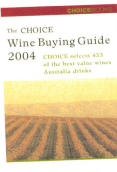
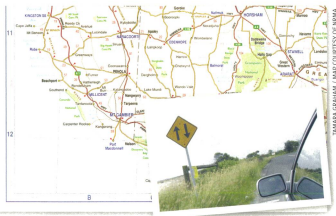
Dianne Layden
Crookwell, NSW

Surprising as it seems, the NSW Department of Fair Trading tells us there's no legal obligation for manufacturers to extend their own manufacturer warranties when defective goods are replaced.

However, **SUNBEAM** told us it does in fact provide a full additional warranty when it replaces defective products, contrary to the advice Dianne received. **SUNBEAM** told us the retailer should have noted the change of warranty date on the customer's receipt.

Manufacturer warranties aside, all products sold are subject to a 'statutory warranty', which guarantees the 'fitness for purpose' of the product. As such, the statutory warranty doesn't cover a fixed period, but reflects what is deemed to be a reasonable life expectancy of the product.

Many manufacturers choose to supplement the statutory warranty with a manufacturer warranty for a specific period.



LETTER OF THE MONTH

We want to hear from you — your experiences help our research and often let other readers know about scams and rip-offs. Positive outcomes you've had to a complaint you took to a manufacturer, retailer, importer or tradesperson interest us, too. Address these letters to **Thumbs Up** at the address on page 50.

To thank you for writing to us, *Your Letters* awards a prize of a CHOICE book to the 'Letter of the month'. This month's winner, Dianne Layden of Crookwell, NSW, receives *The CHOICE Wine Buying Guide 2004*, or any other book of her choice from Consumer Bookshelf, pages 36–38.

We're sorry we don't have the resources to answer all your letters personally, and in the magazine we may edit them or print only an extract. See page 50 for how to reach us.

What *not* to buy for MOTHER'S DAY



The lowdown on which kitchen gadgets and personal care doodads are worth having.

Looking for gifts that'll really come in handy, or just trying to get away with an easy-fix solution for that hard-to-buy-for Mum? Don't fall for the marketing hype that hits the media at this time of the year: our survey of household gadgets proves most Mums can live without an all-in-one automatic toenail-clipper-cum-nail-polish-applicator.

More than 1000 CHOICE Home Testers told us how useful they found 42 kitchen gadgets, snack makers and personal care whatnots. Perhaps not surprisingly, even Great-aunt Beryl could live without a lot of them — they just end up at the back of a cupboard.

Of the 42 gadgets and appliances, the Home Testers told us which ones they owned and how useful they found them. Heading the list was an electric water filter, rated as very useful by 89% of the people who owned one — although not many did. Other appliances rated as very useful by a high percentage of respondents include hair clippers, a rice cooker, an electric toothbrush, electric wok, handheld mixer, handheld blender, benchtop mixer, toaster oven, electric frypan, espresso machine and sandwich maker. Note the popular things are nearly all kitchen appliances: most personal care and snack stuff came well down the list.

The what *not* to buy Mum for Mother's Day list is headed by a hotdog maker — apparently heating a roll and frankfurts without one isn't that tricky. A facial sauna, foot spa, electric massager, ice cream maker, waffle iron, heated rollers, pie maker and nail dryer are other gadgets you can cross off your list.

See the table for a complete list of the 42 appliances and the percentage of people who found them very useful.

Appliance (no. of responses)

Electric water filter (35)	89
Hair clippers (369)	75
Rice cooker (247)	75
Electric toothbrush (460)	73
Electric wok (199)	65
Handheld mixer (579)	65
Handheld blender (605)	64
Benchtop mixer (451)	63
Toaster oven (146)	62
Electric frypan (629)	60
Espresso machine (175)	59
Sandwich maker (811)	57
Electric can opener (147)	55
Coffee grinder (250)	53
Benchtop food processor (618)	52
Epilator (196)	52
'Health' grill (203)	51
Benchtop blender (534)	50
Hair straightener (101)	50
Breadmaker (447)	49
Deli-slicer (47)	47
Slow cooker / crockpot (307)	47
Electric knife (487)	45
Electric mincer (56)	41
Hair styler / curling wand (328)	41
Juicer (432)	41
Popcorn maker (223)	40
Filter coffee maker (316)	38
Vertical grill (64)	38
Deep fat fryer (224)	37
Aromatherapy diffuser (75)	36
Electric heat pad (60)	35
Milk shake maker (209)	34
Nail dryer (31)	29
Pie maker (138)	26
Heated rollers (178)	25
Waffle iron (75)	24
Ice cream maker (93)	23
Electric massager (250)	19
Foot spa (284)	18
Facial sauna (30)	13
Hotdog maker (19)	0

% who found it very useful

Good carbs, BAD CARBS?

Should we really be concerned about the GI of what we eat, or is this yet another passing food fad? We sort the science from the hype.

We're used to the idea of good fats and bad fats. Now, it seems, some carbohydrates might be healthier for us than others.

The glycaemic index, or GI, is a way of ranking carbohydrate foods according to their effect on blood glucose. Foods with a low GI (such as whole grains, pasta and most legumes) make our blood glucose rise and fall gently. High-GI foods (such as white bread and potatoes) are broken down quickly by our bodies and cause the blood glucose levels to surge and then crash. Some nutritionists now think these surges in blood glucose can affect our long-term health.

The diet gurus are leaping onto the GI bandwagon. Popular books and magazine articles are appearing on the subject, and GI claims are appearing in food ads and on labels (see *Dodgy claims*, page 12). High-GI foods such as bread and potatoes are roundly condemned as causing obesity, heart disease and diabetes. What's behind it all and how much of it should we believe?

WHICH FOODS HAVE A LOW GI?

GI's a complex concept and it's not simple to pick which foods have a low or high GI. Factors that influence the GI include:

- **The type of starch in the food.** Some types of rice, for example, have a high GI (regardless of whether they're white or brown) — but basmati

rice, which has a different type of starch, has a medium GI.

- **Cooking and processing.** How the food is prepared and whether it's in big chunks or broken down into fine particles influence how fast it's digested. Pasta, for example, has a low GI probably because the starch is trapped in a sponge-like matrix of protein molecules in the pasta dough.

- **The amount of fat.** Fat slows the rate at which the stomach empties, and so slows the rate of digestion. Many fatty foods that are definitely unhealthy nevertheless have low GI values.

- **The acidity of the food.** Acid foods like vinegar, lemon juice, vinaigrette dressing and acidic fruit also slow down the rate at which the stomach empties and so have a lower GI.

Figure 1 (page 11) shows GI values for some popular foods. Glucose is taken as the standard, with a value of 100. Values of 70 or higher are considered high, 56 to 69 medium and 55 or less low.

What might seem surprising is that something like a Mars bar doesn't have a particularly high GI (62) despite all the sugar in it. Even table sugar on its own only has a GI of 61. The reason is that, chemically, table sugar (sucrose, of which there'll be a lot in the Mars bar too) consists of a molecule of glucose joined to a molecule of fructose. As only half of it's glucose it doesn't have the same impact on blood glucose levels as glucose alone.



GETTY IMAGES

IN A NUTSHELL

Despite the claims, there's not yet conclusive evidence that low-GI foods are either generally health-promoting or slimming. The whole theory of the GI of foods affecting your health is still very much 'work in progress'.

If you want to give GI a go, don't choose foods based on their GI alone — look at their overall nutritional value.

But GI is good news for people with diabetes, both with Type 1 (insulin-dependent) and Type 2 (non-insulin-dependent).

In addition, some relatively low-GI foods, such as ice cream and chocolate, are loaded with fat and kilojoules. While they may well be delicious, they're definitely not healthy, definitely not slimming and definitely not good for heart health.

As another example of how hard it is to guess a food's GI, many breakfast cereals have a high GI value, while pasta, mixed-grain bread, legumes and most fruits have medium to low GI — yet a look at their overall nutritional value tells us most of them are good for us.

On top of this, a food can technically have a high GI, but if it doesn't contain much carbohydrate in the first place — like some vegetables — it's not going to have much impact on your blood glucose levels (see Q&A, page 13).

The moral of the story is not to look at GI on its own but in the whole context of the food's nutritional value and what's a healthy balance of foods. The World Health Organization agrees with this approach.

HOW GI'S MEASURED

There are so many factors that affect blood glucose levels that measuring GI is quite difficult. The current scientifically validated method uses volunteers who are willing to eat the test food and have their blood glucose levels measured over two hours. They're given an amount of food containing a standard amount of carbohydrate (usually 50 g) and their blood glucose response is compared with swallowing the same amount of pure glucose. The GI value is calculated from the blood glucose response over the two-hour period, with glucose as the standard with a GI of 100.

Some product labels claim a low GI based on an 'in vitro' (test-tube) test done by the International Diabetes Institute in Melbourne. This test doesn't involve measurements of blood glucose, so it doesn't give a real GI value. The International Diabetes Institute says its in vitro test is a practical tool for product development, and promotional material must involve a test on people (see *Dodgy claims*).

One way to be sure about a food's GI is to look for the GI symbol (see below). The GI won't necessarily be low, but it will be stated on the label and it will have been scientifically tested.

REAL BENEFITS IN LOW GI?

The GI's an idea that's been around in the scientific community for more than 20 years. There's a solid body of research behind its value for people with diabetes (see page 12). Nevertheless, there's not yet conclusive evidence for some of the other health benefits that have been claimed to stem from following a low-GI diet. The GI concept is still very much 'work in progress' and some health authorities, particularly in the US, are wary of embracing it.

The suggestion that low-GI diets can help us lose weight and keep it off is based on the argument that the faster we digest our food, the sooner we're hungry again and the more we tend to eat. While this seems plausible, there's in fact little evidence to support the idea.

Certainly some low-GI foods are very filling and delay the onset of hunger pangs for many hours. But so does potato, and that has a very high GI. Some small studies have found that people eating low-GI diets lose more weight or body fat than those eating high-GI diets with the same kilojoules; but other studies have found no differences.

The evidence is promising but inconclusive in connection with GI and heart disease. It's been suggested that the high blood glucose and insulin levels that result from eating a high-GI diet may increase the risk of heart disease via insulin resistance, one of a cluster of metabolic abnormalities that make up the so-called metabolic syndrome (or Syndrome X). These abnormalities also include high blood levels of insulin, glucose and triglycerides, low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol and high blood pressure.

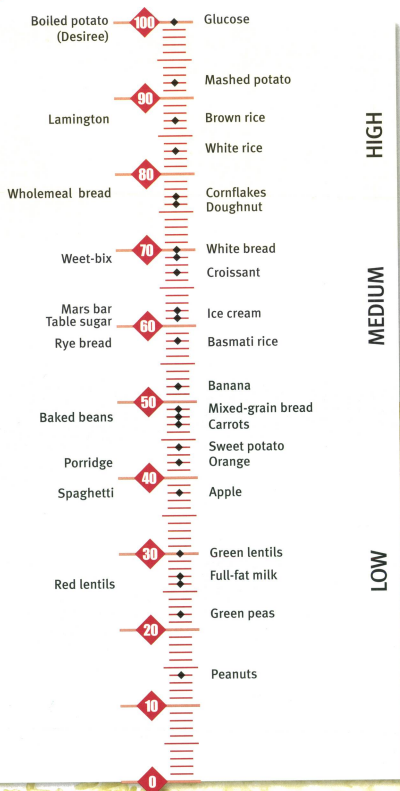
Some studies have found a small reduction in heart disease risk in people eating low-GI diets, but others have reported no significant benefits.

Until there's stronger evidence that the GI of foods has an effect on the your health, there's not much point fussing about it in your diet unless you have diabetes. But if you'd like to hedge your bets, see *How to eat a low-GI diet*, page 12.

One way to be sure of a product's GI is to look for this GI symbol. The GI value will be shown near the nutrition information panel, along with the words 'high', 'medium' or 'low'. To get this label, the GI will have been reliably measured and the food must meet specific nutrition criteria that depend on the type of food. The GI symbol is a registered trademark of the University of Sydney (for more information go to www.gisymbol.com.au).



Figure 1. THE AVERAGE GI OF SOME FOODS



It's practically impossible to guess whether a food is low- or high-GI — you have to know. Traditional nutrition wisdom is no guide. The actual numbers can even be confusing — tables of GI values give a range for some foods. For example, boiled white spaghetti has values ranging from 32 to 64, and even a food as apparently simple as boiled red lentils has values between 18 and 32. The simplest approach is just to know which foods are high-, medium- or low-GI. The graph on the left shows average values for some common foods.



GOOD NEWS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

The strongest evidence for a health benefit from low-GI foods is for people with diabetes. It's estimated that almost one in four Australians of 25 or over has diabetes or a condition of impaired glucose metabolism known as pre-diabetes.

Type 2 (non-insulin-dependent) diabetes is the commonest form (85–90% of all people with diabetes). It affects mostly older people (although more and more younger people are getting it). It's caused by the body no longer responding properly to insulin or not producing enough of it. Diabetes Australia says people with pre-diabetes and others at risk of Type 2 diabetes can delay its onset, or even prevent it altogether, by following a healthy lifestyle.

There's evidence that choosing low-GI foods will help these people control their blood glucose levels, but it's only part of the story. It's important to make healthy food choices generally, take regular exercise and, above all, not be overweight. The same lifestyle recommendations apply in the management of Type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetes — with the addition that research has shown you're less likely to develop complications if you stick to a low-GI diet.

HOW TO EAT A LOW-GI DIET

Don't choose foods purely on the basis of GI; overall, other factors are more important in

making good food choices. The way to go is to eat a healthy diet generally, then do some fine-tuning for GI if you want to. The bottom line, whether you want to lose weight or just stay healthy, remains the same.

A healthy start

- Eat plenty of fruit and vegies — at least two serves of fruit and five of vegies each day for adults.
- Eat plenty of wholegrain cereals.
- Eat lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives such as legumes and nuts. They're good sources of protein.
- Limit saturated and trans fats. They definitely increase your risk of heart disease.
- Include fat-reduced dairy foods and/or alternatives in your diet. As well as being a good source of protein, dairy foods are the richest source of calcium in the Australian diet.
- Choose foods low in salt.
- Don't eat too much sugary food.
- Limit alcohol to two drinks a day for men and one for women, and drink plenty of water.

(For more on healthy eating, see CHOICE, March 2003, or go to www.choiceextra.com.au and click on 'healthy eating' under 'Food' in the index.)

The above diet should be quite low-GI anyway, and a few simple rules make it easy to fine-tune your food choices to further lower the average GI of a meal.

Dodgy claims

Advertising departments have discovered the possibilities of GI and extravagant claims have appeared on labels and other promotional material. As usual, the hype is well ahead of the science.

- **NESTLÉ Milo** contains 20% sugar and 10% fat (most of it saturated), but it has a low GI (33) when made with whole milk according to the directions — and, based on this, it will apparently “help kids to avoid snacks between meals”. When we asked **NESTLÉ** for scientific evidence to back up this claim, none was forthcoming. (Incidentally, the GI of the milk before you add the **Milo** is only 31.)
- **LOWAN Gradual Energy Release** claims to be “a low-GI cereal, so it provides a gradual energy release”. But this claim is based only on the International Diabetes Institute's “in vitro” test that doesn't in fact measure GI at all (see *How GI's measured*, page 10). When measured by the internationally recognised method at the University of Sydney, the GI of the **LOWAN** product was 68 (at the top end of the medium range).
- **NORGANIC Instant porridge** and **NORGANIC Instant porridge with honey** also both claim to have low GI, but again they weren't tested by a scientifically validated method. (**NORGANIC** says it's having the product retested using a valid method.)



Fine-tuning GI

■ **Choose whole grains.** White and wholemeal bread, some types of rice and many breakfast cereals sit high on the glycaemic index. Whole grains and wholegrain foods, on the other hand, generally have a lower GI — and offer other health benefits into the bargain.

■ **Don't be afraid of pasta.** Farfalle, fettucine or fusilli — regardless of size or shape, ordinary pasta has low GI values (but this doesn't include gluten-free pasta or potato gnocchi). It's a good alternative to mashed potato or white rice.

■ **Bank on beans.** Beans and other legumes are an excellent source of protein. They're rich in dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals, and phytochemicals (chemicals in plants that are thought to be health-promoting). And they generally have only a small effect on blood sugar and insulin.

■ **Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.** These foods have low to modest effects on blood sugar and insulin. Like beans, they also deliver plenty of healthy nutrients.

CHOICE VERDICT

On its own, the GI value doesn't give you enough information, because it doesn't take into account the whole food, only the carbohydrate in it. Chocolate and ice cream, for example, generally have quite low GIs, but we certainly shouldn't be pigging out on them. On the other hand, there are many high-GI foods, particularly bread and potatoes, that are definitely part of a healthy diet. Put GI into the whole nutrition context.

If you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, there's growing evidence that you should be considering GI as a factor in making healthy food choices. For generally healthy people, though, GI is very much still 'work in progress' as to what effect — if any — it has on our health. As yet there's no compelling evidence that a low-GI diet will help us lose weight, but there's inconclusive evidence that it may help prevent heart disease. ■

Q&A

I really like bread and potatoes. Do I now have to give them up?

No. Bread and potatoes are still very much part of a healthy diet, even if your goal is to reduce the overall GI. It's the average GI of a meal that's important. And some types of bread and potato have a lower GI than others. You could change to wholegrain bread, and perhaps cut down on potato by also including some sweet potato or basmati rice in your diet.

Some vegetables, like parsnips and pumpkin, have high GIs. Does this mean we shouldn't eat them?

Definitely not. In contrast to potatoes, these vegetables don't contain much carbohydrate. So, despite their high GI, they have very little impact on blood glucose, but they contain loads of vitamins and health-promoting phytochemicals. Eat them to your heart's content.

What about alcoholic drinks? Do they have a high GI?

Most alcoholic drinks contain very little carbohydrate — most wines have almost none. So tables of GI values give them a zero score. Beer, though, contains a small amount of carbohydrate — so if you drink lots of it (not a good idea, really) expect it to have some effect on your blood glucose.

I'm a keen runner and like to compete in triathlons. Is it right that following a low-GI diet will help me to win?

Some sports dietitians advise that manipulating the GI values of your diet can give you a winning edge. Low-GI foods have been shown to extend endurance when eaten two hours before strenuous exercise. The idea is that the meal will have left your stomach before you start, but will remain in your small intestine releasing energy for several hours afterwards. And high-GI foods (such as sports drinks) are good for a quick glucose top-up during and immediately after strenuous exercise.



Fact or FRICTION?

Fuel and oil additives and devices called fuel catalysts promise to make your car a better person. But are their claims justified?

IN A NUTSHELL

Our research suggests that:

- **Oil additives** are unnecessary if you use the motor oil that's recommended by your car's manufacturer, and change it at the required intervals.
- **Some fuel additives** may have some benefits.
- **Manufacturers of fuel catalysts** should seek dialogue with car manufacturers and governments to establish whether their products work.

Would you like to lower your car's fuel consumption and exhaust emissions? Or are you worried about engine parts wearing away against each other? Then you may have considered using an aftermarket fuel or oil additive, or installing a fuel catalyst.

There's quite a range available. We've concentrated on fuel treatments such as octane boosters and fuel system cleaners, and anti-wear oil or engine treatments.

Additives and catalysts are claimed to have benefits such as better fuel efficiency, protection from engine wear and/or better engine performance (details of their claims are given for each category below). Some of them sound too good to be true — and if they were true you'd have to wonder why these products aren't used much more widely.

For example, with the introduction of the fuel consumption label in 2001 (which has to be displayed on all new cars in the dealer showroom) and increasing fuel prices, fuel consumption has become an important factor for car buyers.

So if, for example, fuel catalysts reduced fuel consumption by 10% or more, wouldn't there be at least one car manufacturer who'd see a marketing advantage in factory-equipping all its new cars with a catalyst? And even if car manufacturers ignored them for some reason, wouldn't governments and motoring organisations be pushing their use?

And if there was an oil additive that improved the performance of any engine oil in any car, wouldn't the big oil companies benefit from using it in their own products? Wouldn't car manufacturers and motoring organisations ask them to?

NOT ENOUGH PROOF

To find out why this isn't the case, we talked to a range of representatives from major oil companies, car manufacturers, motoring organisations and

government departments, some of our overseas consumer organisation counterparts, as well as manufacturers of additives and fuel catalysts.

The result: the latter were the only ones endorsing the products. A common criticism mentioned by the sceptics is that there are no, or not enough, independent test results relevant to passenger cars that back the products' claimed benefits.

Is this one big conspiracy between oil and car companies (which, it could be argued, benefit from cars using a lot of fuel and breaking down eventually) and the government (which benefits from the fuel excise)?

Or are the manufacturers of additives and catalysts using scientific-sounding but unsubstantiated claims about how to get more from our wheels?

The two camps seem to be at loggerheads. But we think it's up to the products' manufacturers to provide solid and relevant independent test results, rather than test results that don't relate to everyday driving, or testimonials from happy customers, which are of little scientific value.

Here's what everybody had to say.

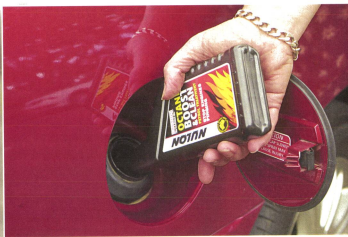
Oil and engine additives

WHAT ARE THEY?

Oil additives (also called engine additives or metal treatments) are often based on regular motor oil, but contain various ingredients such as anti-wear additives (a common one being PTFE, probably better known under the trade name Teflon), detergents or oxidation inhibitors. You're usually supposed to add them at each oil change.

WHAT DO THEY CLAIM?

The common claim is that these products reduce engine wear by coating metal surfaces with the anti-



wear additive. Depending on the product, other claims include protection against oil thickening and deposits, as well as increased engine performance.

WHAT THE MANUFACTURERS SAY

■ **Nulon:** Nulon provided an independent test report showing higher load-carrying performance of its E30 Long Term Engine Treatment, compared to an engine oil, but this result is only relevant for extreme driving situations, such as racing.

■ **Wynn's:** Wynn's didn't provide any independent reports for its oil additives.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

■ **Consumer Reports:** Our US partner organisation has conducted two tests involving oil additives. In 1996 they included three popular products in their test of motor oils, using New York taxis over 96,000 km. Their conclusion: the additives provided no discernible benefits for engine wear compared to modern engine oils.

In 1998 they tested an additive called **PROLONG**, claimed to protect an engine for hours even after the engine oil had been drained. Their test didn't confirm the claim — the test engine containing just the additive died within minutes, at the same time as an identical engine without the additive.

■ **Caltex:** Caltex told us it doesn't recommend aftermarket oil additives. It spends a lot on research developing motor oils that provide a balanced performance across a range of areas according to car manufacturers' specifications. Aftermarket products may improve performance in one area but decrease it in others. If an aftermarket additive is used, the warranty on the performance of Caltex products doesn't apply any more.

■ **BP:** BP told us all aftermarket additives should

be independently assessed for being able to do what's claimed.

■ **Ford:** Ford says the owner's manuals of all its models include a statement that supplementary engine oil additives are unnecessary and could lead to engine damage that isn't covered by the Ford warranty. It hasn't seen valid test results of any description to back any of the claims made by aftermarket products.

Ford says it's tested a very popular product and found no improvement in engine friction. It says interactions between aftermarket products and engine oil can adversely affect the proper operation and durability of a vehicle.

Ford also pointed out that the US Federal Trade Commission upheld several charges against aftermarket products, including some containing PTFE (see *Unsubstantiated claims*, page 16).

■ **Mitsubishi:** Mitsubishi told us additives and treatments are unnecessary, as its vehicles are designed to operate using the engine oil and other fluids as recommended in the owner's manuals.

■ **AAA/NRMA/NZAA:** Australian motoring organisations say there aren't enough independent test results to convince them these products are effective. Modern engine oils are very good, and if the right oil is used and changed at the recommended intervals, there won't be any problems. The New Zealand Automobile Association doesn't endorse any of these products either.

WHAT WE THINK

Based on the available evidence, oil additives are unnecessary if you use the motor oil that's recommended for your car, and change it at the recommended intervals. Using an additive may affect your car's warranty.

UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS

The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) settled a number of charges against several additive manufacturers. For example, in 1997 it said the **SLICK 50** oil/engine treatment containing PTFE (Teflon) falsely claimed that without the product, car engines have little or no protection from wear at start-up and commonly experience premature failure caused by wear.

However, in the opinion of the FTC, most car engines are adequately protected from wear at start-up when they use motor oil as recommended in the owner's manual. And it's uncommon for engines to experience premature failure caused by wear, whether they've been treated with the product or not.

The FTC also complained that **SLICK 50** lacked proof for claims such as:

- Reduced engine wear.
- Reduced toxic emissions.
- Increased fuel economy.
- Increased power.

Fuel additives

WHAT ARE THEY?

Fuel additives are liquids you're supposed to add to your fuel tank either each time you fill up or at certain intervals. They contain ingredients such as octane boosters, detergents or lubricants.

WHAT DO THEY CLAIM?

The claimed benefits depend on the type of additive: boosting the petrol's octane number (so reducing engine knock or pinging); cleaning the fuel system and keeping it clean; improving fuel consumption, engine performance and engine wear; allowing cars to be run on regular unleaded instead of lead replacement petrol (LRP).

WHAT THE MANUFACTURERS SAY

- **Nulon:** Nulon provided an independent test report showing the octane-boosting effect of its **PRO STRENGTH Octane Booster** for performance and competition engines.
- **Wynn's:** Wynn's provided a chart that showed its **SPITFIRE Injector Cleaner** can remove deposits that may form when using a lower-quality fuel without deposit control, or under severe driving conditions.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

- **Ford:** Ford says its fuel injector supplier doesn't endorse any aftermarket injector cleaners and fuel additives. It's tested a number of fuel additives and in each case found they made no difference.
- **Holden:** Holden acknowledged that certain fuel

additives act as friction modifiers that may have some benefit in terms of reducing friction within the engine. However, it hasn't conducted any testing and therefore can't quantify the effect.

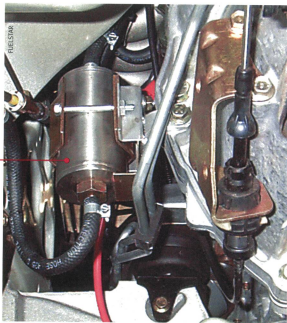
- **Mitsubishi:** Mitsubishi told us additives and treatments are unnecessary, as its vehicles are designed to operate using the oil and other fluids recommended in the owner's manuals.
- **BP:** BP told us all aftermarket additives should be independently assessed for being able to do what's claimed.
- **Caltex:** Caltex says good-quality fuels already contain detergent packages that make additives claiming to clean the fuel system unnecessary. Most additives claiming to allow cars to be run on unleaded petrol instead of lead replacement petrol (LRP) use the same or similar chemistry as LRP and usually work. As LRP may be discontinued in the foreseeable future, these additives may become the only option for owners of, for example, vintage cars.
- **NSW EPA:** The NSW Environment Protection Authority told us it hasn't seen any definitive independent research on what fuel additives do.
- **AAA/NRMA/NZAA:** Australian motoring organisations say there aren't enough independent test results to convince them these products are effective, and that cars using unleaded petrol don't need fuel additives. However, in some situations (engine problems such as rough idling, hard to start) a fuel additive recommended by the car manufacturer may be beneficial. The New Zealand Automobile Association doesn't endorse any of these products.
- **RACV:** On its website the RACV says it doesn't recommend aftermarket fuel additives, as they're often an unnecessary expense, and vehicles can suffer from uncontrolled and incorrect dosing.

WHAT WE THINK

Fuel additives are unnecessary in most everyday driving situations if you use good-quality fuel (which you'll get at most outlets) and have your car maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Using one may affect your car's warranty. However, there are some situations where a fuel additive may be beneficial, but even then you should still check with your car's manufacturer first:

- Additives allowing older cars to run on unleaded petrol instead of LRP (see **Caltex**, above).
- Temporary use of a fuel system cleaner if required (for example, if you've used 'dirty' fuel).
- Use of an octane booster if you're having engine knock problems even when using premium unleaded petrol.

Fuel catalysts are either connected to the fuel line (as in this case) or added directly into the fuel tank.



Fuel catalysts

WHAT ARE THEY?

They're devices you install in or around your car's fuel line, or drop into the fuel tank.

WHAT DO THEY CLAIM?

They usually claim to change the chemical and/or physical attributes of the fuel, leading to more optimised combustion and therefore better fuel economy. Other claimed benefits, depending on the product, include lower emissions, higher power output, and a smoother-running engine.

WHAT THE MANUFACTURERS SAY

■ **Fitch:** The FITCH contains a number of metals. Fitch says some recent developments indicate that its product works. For example, after positive pilot testing, a manufacturer of mining vehicles has decided to put the catalyst in all new vehicles, and the US government has granted the company \$1.5 million for further research and development. A test carried out for Fitch at an Australian lab, using a diesel 4WD with more than 300,000 km on the clock, confirmed the product's claims.

■ **Fuelstar:** The FUELSTAR is a tin-based catalyst. Fuelstar says it's done a lot of research into the working mechanism of its product and has a good understanding of how it works. It says proper laboratory testing of the product is very difficult and expensive. It refers to results from a test carried out in a Californian lab in 2002, using a diesel truck and confirming Fuelstar's claims. It believes there's no need for further testing, but it will instead concentrate on convincing fleet managers and car manufacturers of the benefits of the product.

■ **Prozone:** The PROZONE consists of a metal alloy and a magnetic chamber. Prozone chose not to talk to us.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

■ **Which?** In 1994, our UK partner organisation tested the magnetic **SAVECO PETROL BOOSTER** (which is clamped to the fuel line) and the **BROQUET FUEL CATALYST**, which consists of metal alloy pellets wrapped in wire gauze that are dropped into the fuel tank. Each device was tested in three different cars. The conclusion: "Our tests showed no significant effects on fuel consumption. The evidence against such products is overwhelming. Scientists dismiss the 'theory' behind them."

The magazine also pointed out that, "The [UK] Advertising Standards Authority has upheld 14 complaints about the claims made for fuel-saving devices in recent years. In all the cases the advertisers

CHOICE Fuel-saving device

Cut this out, put it in your car, follow the tips below and you could reduce your fuel costs by 10% or more! And lower fuel consumption also means lower emissions.

- Fully endorsed by car makers, motoring organisations and governments.
- Easy to fit — no tools required.
- Works through a scientific combination of behavioural change, proper maintenance and common sense.
- Over 100,000 distributed this month.

The CHOICE Fuel Saver

- Use your car less — walk, carpool or use public transport instead.
- Avoid hard acceleration and braking.
- Shift up through the gears early — high revs use more fuel.
- Don't warm up your engine — it's unnecessary and wastes fuel.
- Switch off the engine if you stop for more than 30 seconds.
- Inflate the tyres to the maximum recommended pressure.
- Ensure your car is serviced and tuned regularly.
- Take off the roof rack when you don't need it.

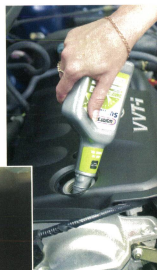
were judged to have failed to supply details of testing which were adequate to substantiate claims made."

■ **Consumer Reports:** In 2001, our US partner organisation tested a platinum-based fuel catalyst in two cars, and found no change in the fuel economy. It concluded, "The best way to keep your car running efficiently is to follow the vehicle manufacturer's service schedule."

■ **AAA/NRMA/NZAA:** Australian motoring organisations say there aren't enough independent test results to convince them these products are effective. The New Zealand Automobile Association also doesn't endorse any of these products.

WHAT WE THINK

If these products worked as claimed, the potential impact on greenhouse gas emissions, fuel reserves and air pollution would be massive. It's just not likely that governments and car manufacturers worldwide would conspire so consistently and efficiently to stonewall such a product. So if the fuel catalyst manufacturers are convinced their products work, we're urging them to seek dialogue with governments and car manufacturers and get more independent testing done to provide evidence for the claims. ■



PHOTOS: TAMARA GRAHAM

GETTING HAIR INTO condition

The verdict on 39 conditioners
for normal hair or use every day.



IN A NUTSHELL

- Of the 39 conditioners in the trial, the top eight included two that cost less than \$1 per 100 mL.
- Only three of the 11 more expensive salon products were rated high enough overall to make it into the What to buy list — but trialists did in general find they needed to use less of them, so they might last a bit longer.

No matter how good your shampoo, if you want soft and manageable hair that's easy to comb through and style after the wash, you need a good conditioner, especially if you have long, thick, curly, treated or damaged hair.

The detergents in shampoo wash the hair clean but also strip it of sebum, which lubricates it naturally. Without it, the outer layer (cuticle) is rough. Many detergents also leave the hair with an overall negative charge, which further roughens the cuticle and produces statically charged 'flyaway' hair, one strand repelling the other. Hair in such condition then gets tangled and is difficult to comb and style. That's where conditioner comes in.

Conditioner makes hair more manageable. It deposits a coating on the hair that smooths the cuticle and reflects light, so your hair looks shiny and is easy to comb through.

Conditioners are likely to contain the following:

- Oils and lubricants for lustre and to reduce friction — basically, to replace the sebum the shampoo washed out.
- Humectants, which attract water to the hair, making it more flexible.
- Quaternary ammonium compounds to reduce static build-up, making hair easier to comb. These are positively charged agents that are attracted and attach to the negatively charged hair strands, especially to porous or damaged areas of the hair that need it most.
- Thickeners (people don't like runny conditioners).
- Emulsifiers, preservatives, fragrance and, of course, water.

In 2002, Australians spent close to \$150 million on conditioners in supermarkets and grocery shops alone. Many more are sold in specialist shops and hairdressing salons, usually at a higher price. Are these salon products worth their extra cost? To try to answer this question and to find out which brands are liked the best, we bought 39 conditioners (suitable for normal or all hair types or use every day) and asked more than 400 CHOICE Home Testers to try them out for us. For more on the trial, see page 20.

The table on the right lists all conditioners in the trial. The trialists rated highest the ones that made their hair easy to manage and look good; they wanted soft, shiny hair that has 'body' and is easily combed and controlled. They generally preferred conditioners that smelt subtly floral, fruity or sweet and were neither too runny nor too thick.

Continued on page 20

Brand / product (in rank order, alphabetical when equal)	1 Overall score (%)	1 Appearance score (%)	1 Manageability score (%)	2 Salon product	Price (\$ per 100 mL)*
DOVE Revitalising Care Treatment	70	70	70		1.71
SUNSILK Maximum Shine Treatment	70	65	65		1.78
DE LORENZO Moisture Balance Factor 1-3	65	65	65	✓	6.38
DECORE Normal Hair	65	65	65		0.90
GARNIER FRUCTIS Fortifying Cream	65	65	65		1.97
PALMOLIVE NATURALS for Normal Hair with Aloe Vera (A)	65	65	65		0.53
SO SOS Miracle Hair Repair Treatment	65	65	65	✓	11.48 (B)
TIGI BEDHEAD Moisture Maniac	65	60	65	✓	9.18
AGREE Normal Hair	60	60	60		0.45
ANDREW COLLINGE Revitalising	60	60	65		4.98
BI-LO Everyday	60	60	60		0.32
CLAIROL HERBAL ESSENCES Refreshing	60	60	65		1.65
FIVE STARS	60	60	60		0.18
GOT2B Instantly Gratified Instant	60	65	70		3.80
JOICO Lite Daily	60	60	60	✓	4.40
PANTENE Classic Care Complete Therapy	60	60	60		1.66
REDKEN Active Express	60	60	60	✓	8.70
ADVANCED VOS Sheer Vitality	55	55	60		1.00
COLES Persona	55	55	55		0.35
EDWARD BEALE Balance Latte	55	60	60		1.98
HAIRDRESSER'S FORMULA Detangling Crème	55	55	55		1.85
MATRIX BIOLAGE Conditioning Balm	55	60	60	✓	6.95
NATURES ORGANICS Apple Fresh Fruits	55	55	55		0.36
PEARS HERBAL CARE Aloe Vera, Honeysuckle & Vitamin E	55	55	55		1.08
REVLON FLEX Normal for Nourishing Hair	55	55	60		0.53
WELLA DELVA Daily Use	55	55	60	✓	6.54
XTAH RAW SENSUALITY Hydration	55	55	55	✓	11.00
MELROSE Everyday Sage	50	55	55		1.18
NATIO Botanical	50	50	50		3.18
RPR My Aloe Vera	50	50	50	✓	4.32
SCHWARZKOPF EXTRA CARE Vital Nourishment	50	55	55		2.12
SIMPLE No Knots Gentle	50	55	60		3.50
TERAX Original Crema Hair Treatment	50	55	60	✓	9.99
WELLA BALSAM for Normal Hair	50	50	55		0.60
ANTICA HERBAVITA Royal Cream Restructuring Treatment	45	55	55		6.15
BLACK & GOLD Normal	45	45	45		0.24
CRABTREE & EVELYN Aloe Vera	45	55	60		7.98
NO FRILLS Family Conditioner Normal	45	50	50		0.14
SCHWARZKOPF PROFESSIONAL Bonacure Gloss Treatment	45	45	45	✓	12.63

* This is based on the price we paid for the most commonly sold size, converted to a price per 100 mL for easier comparison. If bigger packs are available they may work out cheaper.

(A) Just as we were going to press the manufacturer told us this product has been reformulated.

(B) Price includes refillable container.

1 Scores

These are the averaged trialists' scores, converted to percentages and rounded to the nearest 5%. The overall score is a score in its own right, not a combination of other scores. See The trial, page 20, for more on how trialists rated the conditioners.

2 Salon/specialist product

A tick indicates the conditioner is sold in hairdressing salons or specialist hair care shops. All the others are available in supermarkets, brand outlets or department, variety, chemist or health stores.

WHAT TO BUY

Price paid (\$ per 100 mL)

DOVE Revitalising Care Treatment	1.71
SUNSILK Maximum Shine Treatment	1.78
DE LORENZO Moisture Balance Factor 1-3	6.38
DECORE Normal Hair	0.90
GARNIER FRUCTIS Fortifying Cream	1.97
PALMOLIVE NATURALS for Normal Hair with Aloe Vera*	0.53
SO SOS Miracle Hair Repair Treatment	11.48**
TIGI BEDHEAD Moisture Maniac	9.18

* See footnote (A), above.

** Includes refillable container.

Build-up or bad hair day?

The majority of trialists generally buy the same brand of shampoo and conditioner. However, almost half change brands after some time, largely because they think the product becomes less effective on their hair after a while. One reason for the product to lose its effectiveness could be a build-up of conditioner residue, which can weigh hair down and make it less manageable and duller-looking.

To remove the build-up, some hairdressers recommend using a 'clarifying' shampoo now and then, or one that doesn't contain a conditioning agent, such as a high-detergent shampoo for oily hair. Others are more sceptical about the whole build-up issue and point to other things you can blame for a bad hair day, such as hormonal changes or changing humidity levels.



The trial

We bought (from supermarkets, department, health and specialty stores, pharmacies, specialist hair care shops and hairdressing salons) 39 conditioners suitable for normal hair, use every day or all hair types (or for normal to dry hair, if the brand had no 'normal'). We transferred the conditioners into small bottles marked only with a number so the trialists wouldn't know which brand they were using.

From the many CHOICE Home Testers on our books, 423 took part in this trial, the majority of them women over 30. Each trialist received four bottles of conditioner and used each one three times consecutively, following their usual hair care and styling routine.

After the third use, the trialists filled in a survey form telling us:

- How much they liked the fragrance and consistency.
- How easy it was to rinse out and to comb their hair after use.
- Whether they had to use more or less than usual for it to have an effect.
- What effect it had on their hair in terms of control, body, shine, softness, manageability and appearance.
- How they rated the conditioner overall.

Each brand was tried by about 40 trialists. Thanks to all of you.

From page 18

THE GOOD NEWS

First of all we can say the same for conditioners as we did for shampoos in our report in November 2001 — that more money doesn't always buy you a better product. As far as the conditioners in our trial are concerned, you're probably just as well off with a cheaper supermarket one than with one of the 11 more expensive salon products. These conditioners cost us on average \$8.32 for 100 mL. On the other hand, for the products usually available in supermarkets, we paid on average only \$1.46 for the same amount, and even less for supermarket own-brands.

Only three of the 11 salon products made it into the *What to buy* list, and the most expensive of them all — **SCHWARZKOPF PROFESSIONAL Bonacure Gloss** — costs \$12.63 per 100 mL, yet was among the least liked.

In general, the trialists preferred the (generally weaker) fragrance and (generally thinner) consistency of the supermarket products. They found the salon products a little harder to rinse out (perhaps because of their thicker consistency), but found they could generally use a little less than normal, so they might last longer.

THE VERDICT

The top eight conditioners range in price from just 53 cents to \$11.48 per 100 mL (see *What to buy*, page 19). The profiles on the right list particular points that the trialists noted about each of these conditioners and some of their comments, so you should get a good idea of each product if you want to change brands and would usually buy a conditioner for normal hair.

If you have dry hair, it's probably worth trying a conditioner for that type of hair — it might make a difference. Our trialists with slightly drier and/or curly hair generally rated many of the conditioners in the trial lower than average on some performance aspects.



Profiles

The conditioners in the *What to buy* list are profiled in rank order from left to right. The profiles are based on trialists' scores for several aspects (see *The trial*, far left) and representative comments. Prices are those we paid, converted to a comparative price for 100 mL.

DOVE REVITALISING CARE

Price per 100 mL: \$1.71

Rated best for appearance, and equal best both overall and for manageability, softness and shine.

Trialists with shorter hair rated it higher overall.

Floral fragrance.

Thicker consistency.

"The fragrance was lovely, it was luxurious to use and gave excellent results on my hair type."

"It left my hair feeling soft without being oily by the end of the following day. I found nothing to dislike."

GARNIER FRUCTIS FORTIFYING CREAM

Price per 100 mL: \$1.97

Rated equal best for control, shine and softness.

Fruity fragrance.

"As my hair is very strong, I was impressed by the softness it gave while maintaining manageability."

"It was a bit too heavy for my hair. The next day it was quite lanky and oily."

SUNSLK MAXIMUM SHINE

Price per 100 mL: \$1.78

Rated equal best overall and for control and shine.

Trialists with fine, coarse or longer hair rated it higher overall, and those with longer hair for appearance.

Many trialists could use a smaller amount than usual.

Sweet fragrance.

Thicker consistency.

"My hair felt fantastic, the fragrance was lovely and people commented on how healthy my hair looked."

"My hair felt clean with no heavy residue left, was easy to style and didn't get frizzy throughout the day."

PALMOLIVE NATURALS FOR NORMAL HAIR*

Price per 100 mL: \$0.53

Floral fragrance.

Thicker consistency.

"I liked the fragrance and overall effects. A little thicker in consistency than I would prefer."

"This conditioner did quite a good job."

* See footnote (A), page 19.

DE LORENZO MOISTURE BALANCE FACTOR 1-3

Price per 100 mL: \$6.38

Rated equal best for control.

Thicker consistency.

"It made my hair shine, with lots of body, controlled the 'flyaways' and was nice and soft."

"The only problem was the time it needed to be left on. In these days of water restrictions, long showers are not encouraged."

SO SOS MIRACLE HAIR REPAIR

Price per 100 mL: \$11.48 (includes a refillable container)

Rated best for 'body' and equal best for ease of combing, control, shine and softness.

Trialists whose hair was neither coarse nor fine rated it higher for manageability.

Many trialists could use a smaller amount than usual.

Coconut fragrance.

Thicker consistency.

"This one was easy to use and left my hair soft and shiny with minimum frizz."

"Although I didn't like the fragrance, this conditioner performed extremely well."

DECORE NORMAL HAIR

Price per 100 mL: \$0.90

Rated equal best for ease of combing.

Trialists with treated hair and thick hair rated it higher for manageability.

Sweet fragrance.

Thicker consistency.

"It had a nice subtle smell, my hair felt clean after rinsing it out and had a bit of shine."

"Positively loved it. The fragrance, the feel, the silkiness, the lot."

TIGI BEDHEAD MOISTURE MANIAC

Price per 100 mL: \$9.18

Many trialists could use a smaller amount than usual.

Fruity fragrance.

Thicker consistency.

"This was a really good conditioner — smelt nice, hair looked nice, easy to manage and easy to brush."

"Very thick to apply but washed out well, combed well and was very manageable."

WHAT ABOUT THE REST?

The remaining conditioners had lower overall scores than the top eight, but several received top scores for individual aspects. If any of these factors is really important to you, you might want to try them.

Fragrance: **CLAIROL HERBAL ESSENCES**.

Texture of the conditioner: **REVLON FLEX**.

Ease of rinsing out: **ADVANCED VOGs**.

Shine: **FIVE STARS** and **GOT2B** (equal best with several of the conditioners in the *What to buy* list — see the profiles, above).

Manageability: **GOT2B** (equal best with **DOVE**).

Some trialists found they used more than normal of the **JOICO**, **NATURES ORGANICS**, **SIMPLE**, **WELLA BALSAM**, **BLACK & GOLD** and **NO FRILLS** conditioners to get an effect, but could use less of the **CLAIROL HERBAL ESSENCES**, **GOT2B** and **TERAX** products.



TAMARA GRAHAM

Are they really handy, versatile, go-anywhere tools? And do you get what you pay for?

MULTITOOLS: godsend or compromise?



IN A NUTSHELL

If you spend a lot of time outdoors adventuring or you're a compulsive handyman, you might want a pocket powerhouse tool — but they won't replace a regular toolbox for the home.

Price makes a difference: all the cheap models on test were disappointing.

Plan to bag a fish or two on the weekend? Maybe you're off camping or bushwalking, or perhaps panning for gold by a peaceful river? You could be doing a thousand and one things when you realise that some sort of tool would come in mighty handy — to extract a hook from your prize catch or open that can of tuna atop the mountain you've just climbed. Perhaps even tighten a loose screw on a butterfly net ...

It's in situations like these that multitools potentially come into their own. Essentially, they're a folding pair of pliers with other tools stored inside the handles — mini screwdrivers, knives, scissors, maybe even a fish scaler or socket wrench to boot.

By combining many useful tools into one, multitools promise convenience and practicality. But do they deliver? To find out, we tested a range of branded models we found in stores that have at least five basic multitool features (pliers, wire cutter, knife blade, can opener and screwdriver for both ordinary and Philips heads).

TESTING

We rated the ability of the multitools to do a variety of common 'outdoorsy' tasks that you might expect them to be able to handle:

- Bending and cutting thick (2.5 mm) wire.
- Cutting a fish hook made from hardened steel.
- Cutting a thick piece of rope (8 mm).
- Opening cans.
- Driving in and out ordinary and Philips-head screws.
- Cutting cheese and tomato.

We also rated the ease of opening the pliers and other tools, factored in the comfort of the handle and put them through endurance and rust-resistance tests.

PAY MORE AND GET MORE

Overall, we found two types of multitool — good (expensive) and bad (cheap) ones.

While the good ones will cost you over \$100, they're capable of doing a large range of jobs and on the whole they're also much easier to use and more durable.

Cheap ones, on the other hand, may be suitable for removing a hook from a fish, but that's about all. Most failed the wire-cutting test (the **KINCROME** was the only cheap model that passed), and all the cheapies failed to cut through a hardened fish hook (though almost half of the expensive models failed this tough test too). Some cheapies couldn't even cut through the 8 mm rope.

LAST A LIFETIME?

We tested how long the multitools are likely to last (assuming they receive a reasonable amount of punishment), and checked them for rust resistance. With the exception of the **COLEMAN**, the cheapies weren't very durable, but it was the worst in the test for rust resistance, for which it was rated 'very poor'. The more expensive models generally did better in both tests — see the table (page 24) for each model's ratings.

WHAT TO BUY

LEATHERMAN Wave	\$189–\$229
LEATHERMAN Super Tool 200	\$169–\$199
SOG S60 Power Lock	\$154
VICTORINOX Swiss Tool 3.0323.L	\$189



What to look for

- A safety lock prevents tools from accidentally closing when in use and is particularly important when using a sharp cutting blade. If the design is easy to engage and release it's a particularly good feature.
- Choose a multitool with features that suit you. A keen fisherman may want different features from a bushwalker or handyman (see *Useful features*, right, for what's available).
- Multitools should be made of stainless steel, and if the construction at least feels sturdy it's a good start.
- Tools should be easy to open out, ideally without having to open out others to get the one you need.
- Check if you find the handle comfortable.

Useful features

All the models tested have the following tools/capabilities:

- Pliers.
- Wire cutter.
- Knife blade (at least one).
- Can opener.
- Bottle opener.
- Screwdriver for both ordinary and Philips heads.

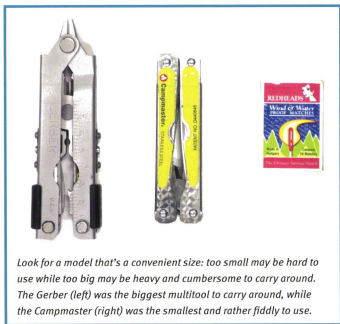
Other features listed for individual models in the

table (page 24) include:

- Saw.
- Rule.
- File.
- Scissors.
- Wire stripper.
- Safety lock.

Some less common features include:

- Accessory screwdriver bit set (only the **BARON**).
- Awl (the **BARON**, **CAMPMASTER**, **KINCROME**, **LEATHERMAN Pocket Survival Tool** and **Super Tool 200**, both **SOGs** and **VICTORINOX**).
- Crimper (the **LEATHERMAN Super Tool 200** and **SOG S60 Power Lock**).
- Socket wrench (the **BARON**).
- Chisel/scrapper (the **VICTORINOX**).
- Wire bender (the **VICTORINOX**).
- Fish scaler (the **CAMPMASTER**, **COLEMAN** and **RED WOLF**).
- Lanyard attachment (so you can attach it to your belt or keep it round your neck — the **BARON**, **KINCROME**, all three **LEATHERMANS**, both **SOGs** and **VICTORINOX**).



Look for a model that's a convenient size: too small may be hard to use while too big may be heavy and cumbersome to carry around. The Gerber (left) was the biggest multitool to carry around, while the Campmaster (right) was the smallest and rather fiddly to use.

PERFORMANCE

6 FEATURES

Brand / model (in rank order)

LEATHERMAN Wave

LEATHERMAN Super Tool 200

SOG S60 Power Lock

VICTORINOX Swiss Tool 3.0323.L

GERBER Pro Scout MP600

SOG S44 Pocket Power Plier

LEATHERMAN Pocket Survival Tool

BARON 24-in-1 Multi-purpose Pliers

CAMPMASTER 14-in-1 Multi Function Pocket Tool

KINCROME Pocket Tool Kit 180 mm 67058

COLEMAN Camper's Tool 8368510T

RED WOLF 14-in-1 Multi Plier 108457

1 Overall score (%)

2 Performance score (%)

3 Ease of use score (%)

4 Durability

5 Rust resistance

Saw

Rule

File

Scissors

Wire stripper

Safe lock

78

76

80

Excellent

Good

✓ (A)

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓ (F)

75

78

70

Very good

Good

✓ (A)

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓ (G)

75

72

80

Excellent

Very good

✓ (A)

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓ (G)

75

72

80

Very good

Very good

✓ (B)

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓ (G)

72

62

87

Fair

Good

✓ (C)

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓ (G)

72

71

73

Fair

Very good

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

69

68

70

Very good

Good

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

56

56

57

Fair

Good

✓ (A)

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

55

47

67

Fair

Good

✓ (E)

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

52

49

57

Fair

Good

✓ (A)

✓ (D)

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

51

39

70

Good

Very poor

✓ (E)

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

47

32

70

Very poor

Good

✓ (E)

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓ (H)

Profiles

Multitools in the *What to buy* list are profiled.

LEATHERMAN WAVE

Price: \$189–\$229

In addition to the features listed in the table, it has a lanyard attachment point.

GOOD POINTS

- Very good can opener and knives, good wire cutter and screwdrivers.
- Excellent durability and good rust resistance.
- The knives and file are on the outside, so there's no need to unfold the pliers to use them.
- Very smooth and easy to open the pliers and accessory tools.

BAD POINTS

- Although its safety lock is very easy to use and release, it's only possible to lock the two knife blades, the saw and the file.

LEATHERMAN SUPER TOOL 200

Price: \$169–\$199

In addition to the features listed in the table, it has a crimper, awl and lanyard attachment point.

GOOD POINTS

- Good, easy-to-release safety lock for all accessory tools.
- Very good screwdrivers and can opener, sharp knife and good wire cutter.
- Very good durability and good rust resistance.

BAD POINTS

- Accessory tools are stiff to lock into position on our sample.

SOG S60 POWER LOCK

Price: \$154

In addition to the features listed in the table, it has a crimper, awl, 1/4" socket drive and lanyard attachment point.

GOOD POINTS

- Good, easy-to-release safety lock for all accessory tools.
- Pliers have pivot points that concentrate the cutting force. Described as a 'compound leverage system' in the instructions, this feature makes cutting wire easy.
- Very good wire cutter, and good sharp knife.
- Very smooth and easy to open pliers and accessory tools.
- Excellent durability and very good rust resistance.

BAD POINTS

- Can opener a little awkward to use.



SPECIFICATIONS

Weight (g)*	Folded dimensions (L x W x D, mm)	Size in use (L x W x D, mm)**	Warranty (years)	Origin	Manufacturer / distributor	Price (\$)†
15 / 225	102 x 32 x 19	159 x 49 x 19	25 (J)	USA	Zen Imports	189–229 (M)
19 / 265	115 x 32 x 19	178 x 54 x 19	25 (J)	USA	Zen Imports	169–199 (M)
13 / 270	119 x 39 x 17	178 x 54 x 17	'Lifetime' (K)	USA	NIOA Trading	154
9 / 281	115 x 34 x 15	170 x 57 x 15	'Lifetime' (K)	Switzerland	Sheldon and Hammond	189
14 / 225	129 x 39 x 17	168 x 41 x 17	'Lifetime' (K)	USA	Fiskars	190
12 / 142	105 x 31 x 13	152 x 43 x 13	'Lifetime' (K)	USA	NIOA Trading	102
10 / 148	102 x 28 x 12	159 x 45 x 12	25 (J)	USA	Zen Imports	129–159 (M)
15 / 223	114 x 32 x 16	175 x 71 x 16	1	China	Big W	13
16 / 138	100 x 28 x 16	151 x 88 x 16	ns	China	Big W	9 (N)
14 / 254	115 x 33 x 17	177 x 56 x 17	'Lifetime' (K)	China	Kincrome Group	20
11 / 150	100 x 32 x 16	155 x 63 x 16	(L)	China	Coleman	21 (N)
10 / 158	105 x 34 x 15	162 x 61 x 15	1	ns	Pure Fishing Australia	20

* With/without carry pouch.

** Maximum length, tip to base of handle, and width at base of handle in the pliers position.

† Prices are recommended retail, as provided by manufacturers in February 2004 (unless otherwise stated), to the nearest dollar.

- (A) Woodsaw.
 (B) Two blades, for cutting metal and wood.
 (C) Replaceable grit-edged blade
 (D) Metric and imperial.
 (E) Imperial only.
 (F) Two knife blades, the saw and file lock in position and have lock release. The remaining accessories don't lock.
 (G) Has lock release.
 (H) To release the lock another accessory has to be partly opened. If all accessories on one side are locked in position they can't be closed without prising the lock open with a screwdriver.
 (I) Doesn't cover the carry pouch.
 (K) A lifetime warranty really only means the product is guaranteed to last as long as it lasts; a specified time period is preferable.
 (L) No manufacturer warranty.
 (M) Average retail price range, as stated by the manufacturer; we paid \$170 for the Wave, \$140 for the Super Tool 200 and \$110 for the Pocket Survival Tool.
 (N) The price we paid in November 2003.

VICTORINOX SWISS TOOL 3.0323.L

Price: \$189

In addition to the features listed in the table, it has a wire bender, wire scraper, chisel/scraper, crimper, awl and lanyard attachment point.

GOOD POINTS

- Good, easy-to-release safety lock for all accessory tools.
- Very good screwdrivers and sharp knife.
- All the accessory tools are on the outside, so there's no need to unfold the pliers to use them.
- Very good durability and rust resistance.
- Very smooth and easy to open pliers and accessory tools.

BAD POINTS

- The only one of the top models unable to cut a hardened steel fish hook easily.



1 Overall score

This is a combination of:
 Performance score: 60%.
 Ease of use score: 40%.

2 Performance score

We rated the multitools' performance on the following common tasks:

- Gripping and bending wire with the pliers.
- Using the wire cutter to cut wire and a hardened wire fish hook.
- Using the can opener.
- Cutting rope and food items — cheese and tomato — with the knife blade.
- Driving screws in and out with the Philips and flat-head screwdrivers.

3 Ease of use score

Factors given equal rating were:

- Ease of opening and closing the pliers and tools.
- Handle comfort.
- Ease of releasing the lock mechanism (if present).

4 Durability

To assess durability (and expecting the multitools in real use to suffer a reasonable amount of rough treatment) we clamped one handle of the tool in a vice and applied a sideways twisting force to the other handle 5000 times. Depending on the extent of damage or distortion to the handles and/or jaws, we gave the multitools ratings from excellent to very poor.

5 Rust resistance

We soaked cotton balls in a 4% salt solution and taped them to the sides of the multitools. We sprayed them daily with salt solution to keep them moist. After storing them at 30°C for eight days we assessed the degree of rust resistance.

6 Features

See Useful features on page 23 and the profiles, left, for more on features.

WHAT ABOUT THE REST?

- The next best three models — the GERBER ProScout MP600, SOG S44 Pocket Power Plier and LEATHERMAN Pocket Survival Tool — worked well overall, and two of them are slightly cheaper than the top four (see the table, above). However, the GERBER and LEATHERMAN couldn't easily cut a hardened steel fish hook, suggesting they're not quite as versatile as the top performers, and the SOG and LEATHERMAN aren't as easy to use. Their smaller size makes it a little harder to open the accessory tools and reduces the comfort of the handle.
- The remaining five models were the cheapies tested (all under \$25); they didn't do well in our performance tests and they aren't as easy to use as the others (see the table for scores).



PHOTO LIBRARY

Do you expect orange marmalade to be made from real oranges? You're in for a surprise.

IN A NUTSHELL

Some of the orange marmalades we looked at have more fruit than our homemade version (far right). But some have no proper oranges in them at all — they're made from reconstituted juice and orange pulp.

Choosing 'diet' marmalade can make a big difference to your breakfast kilojoules.

Marmalade noun a jelly-like preserve with fruit (usually citrus) suspended in small pieces. (Macquarie Dictionary)

Like the compilers of the Macquarie Dictionary, we naïvely thought that marmalade had to be made with fruit. Now we know better.

We checked the labels of all the brands of orange marmalade we could find in supermarkets (33 in all) and were rather stunned to find three with no orange fruit in them at all — **BAXTERS Fine Cut Orange**, **GRANDESSA** (from Aldi) and **IGA MAPLE GROVE Breakfast**. They had orange pulp and reconstituted juice, but no actual fruit. And **COTTEE'S Breakfast** — 100% fruit, despite its name, in fact only contains 9% (the rest is mostly fruit sugar syrup, but would you have thought that?).

WHICH HAVE THE MOST ORANGES?

When we made our own marmalade (see *The homemade version*, far right), carefully weighing everything, we found it was 45% citrus fruit. Most of the bought ones have considerably less.

Only **WEIGHT WATCHERS Fruit Spread** (62% fruit), **ST DALFOUR Orange** (55%) and **CHARLES**

Across the BREA

JACQUIN Orange (50%) have more citrus fruit than our homemade version. The **ST DALFOUR** and **CHARLES JACQUIN** marmalades are also the most expensive (see the table, far right).

WHAT ELSE IS IN THEM?

If you make your own orange marmalade, you only need sugar, oranges, sometimes lemons, and water. But all the marmalades we bought have some extras.

Almost all of them contain **pectin** — it's what makes marmalade set. The stuff used by the food industry is produced from citrus peel in a separate operation (most of it's imported). But if you make your own marmalade, boiling the fruit usually releases enough of the natural pectin from the peel and pith for the marmalade to set. This natural pectin, though, can vary a lot in its setting power, so manufacturers add a factory-made version to make sure their marmalade sets to a reliable consistency.

Most of the marmalades also contain some food acid, added because unless marmalade (and jam) is acidic enough it won't set. So, again, manufacturers add some citric acid to make sure the product has much the same consistency from batch to batch.

CHARLES JACQUIN Orange, **COTTEE'S Breakfast** — 100% fruit, **IXL Orange Breakfast** — **Spreadable Fruit** and **ST DALFOUR Orange** contain concentrated fruit juices instead of sugar. And a few use glucose as well as normal sugar (sucrose) — it's usually made from wheat and it's added to stop the sugar from crystallising when the marmalade's stored for a long time.

WATCHING THE KILOJOULES?

If you're watching your weight, choosing one of the diet marmalades can make a big difference. Normal marmalades are about 1100 kJ per 100 g but **COTTEE'S Diet Breakfast** is only 68 kJ and **IXL Diet Breakfast** 99 kJ per 100 g. Both of these are made without sugar (using polydextrose and an artificial sweetener instead) so they have a very different texture from normal marmalade, and some people will also find the taste different.

WEIGHT WATCHERS Fruit Spread (303 kJ per 100 g), though, is more of a compromise. It's 14% sugar (compared with about 65% for normal marmalade) and so is more like the real thing.

FAST TABLE

Brand and type	1 Oranges (%)	2 Sugars (%)	Origin	Net weight (g)	3 Price per 500 g (\$)
WEIGHT WATCHERS Fruit Spread	62	14	Australia	410	3.70
ST DALFOUR Orange	55	56 (D)	France	284	5.97
CHARLES JACQUIN Orange	50	56 (D)	France	325	5.62
IXL Diet Breakfast	44	2	Australia	375	3.97
ROSE'S English Breakfast	43	67	Australia	500	3.25
COTTEE'S Breakfast	40	67	Australia	250	3.50
BAXTERS Breakfast Orange	38	65	Scotland	340	4.84
IXL Orange Breakfast — Spreadable Fruit	36	40 (D)	Australia	325	4.62
BI-LO Sweet Orange	35	65	Denmark	450	1.66
HOME BRAND Breakfast	35	64	Denmark	450	1.39
NO FRILLS Orange	35	65	Denmark	450	1.53
ROSE'S Sweet Orange	33	66	Australia	500	3.41
MONBULK Breakfast	32	65	Australia	500	2.79
GLEN EWIN JAM Seville Orange	30	65	Australia	475	3.42
GOLDEN CIRCLE Scotch (A)	30 (B)	66	Australia	550	1.81
GOLDEN CIRCLE Scotch Homestyle	30 (B)	66	Australia	500	2.37
IXL Sweet Orange	30	65	Australia	600	2.48
MONBULK Sweet Orange	30	66	Australia	500	2.27
BAXTERS Scotch Orange	27	66	Scotland	340	4.84
COTTEE'S Sweet Orange	27 (B)	66	Australia	250	3.38
IXL Breakfast	24	65	Australia	250	3.68
MONBULK English Style (A)	24	66	Australia	680	1.76
ALLOWRIE Breakfast	22	65	Australia	375	3.52
CHIVERS Medium Cut English Orange	22	67	England	340	4.10
COTTEE'S Diet Breakfast	22	3	Australia	380	3.42
LACKERSTEENS Seville Orange (A)	22	65	Australia	670	2.12
ROSE'S Olde English	16	67	Australia	500	3.41
COTTEE'S Scotch	14	66	Australia	500	2.98
COTTEE'S Breakfast — 100% fruit	9	62 (E)	Australia	250	5.18
BLACK & GOLD Sweet Orange	5	66	Australia	500	1.60
BAXTERS Fine Cut Orange	0 (C)	67	Scotland	340	4.84
GRANDESSA (Aldi)	0 (C)	67	Australia	500	1.39
IGA MAPLE GROVE Breakfast	0 (C)	67	Australia	450	2.62

(A) In a can (all the others are in a jar).

(B) May also include some lemon, which has been included in the percentage.

(C) Made with reconstituted orange juice and orange peel or pulp.

(D) Made with fruit juice concentrate instead of table sugar (the sugars are mostly glucose and fructose).

(E) Made with fruit sugar syrup.

1 Percentage of oranges

This is taken from manufacturer's statement on the label. We haven't included juice or orange pulp that are listed as separate ingredients.

2 Percentage of sugars

Again, this is what's declared on the nutrition information panel. For most of the marmalades it's ordinary table sugar (sucrose), and may also include some glucose. Other sugars are used in some marmalades, as indicated by footnotes.

3 Price

This is given per 500 g for easy comparison and is based on the price we paid in November 2003.

WHAT TO BUY

With 35% real fruit and costing well under \$2 for 500 g (see the table for details), it's hard to go past the BI-LO, HOME BRAND and NO FRILLS brands of orange marmalade. Our tester thought they had a generous amount of shredded peel and a good, fruity, orange flavour.

For the most fruit but a higher price, go for WEIGHT WATCHERS Fruit Spread, ST DALFOUR Orange or CHARLES JACQUIN Orange. With WEIGHT WATCHERS you get the

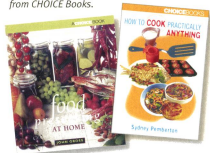
double whammy of less sugar and kilojoules too.



THE HOMEMADE VERSION

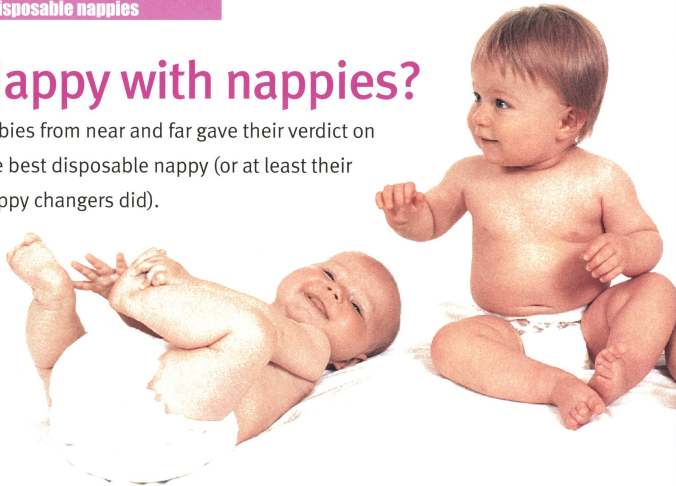
We followed the recipe for orange marmalade in How to cook practically anything (from CHOICE Books; see Consumer Bookshelf, page 36, to order). Using only oranges, lemons, sugar and water, we made a marmalade with 45% fruit. It cost 90 cents for 500 g (not counting the cost of cooking) — and tasted delicious.

There are more good marmalade recipes in Food preserving at home, also available from CHOICE Books.



Happy with nappies?

Babies from near and far gave their verdict on the best disposable nappy (or at least their nappy changers did).



IN A NUTSHELL

With nappies it seems the more you pay the better it is — **HUGGIES** was again the most popular nappy, but also the second most expensive.

The debate over disposable vs. cloth nappies continues to rage, but from an environmental perspective it's a toss of a coin — both have environmental impacts to be considered.

Using cloth nappies and doing your own laundering is by far the cheapest option — expensive disposables or nappy laundering services more than double the cost — see page 30.

Whatever your thoughts on disposable nappies, there's no doubting their continuing popularity. Last time we put them to the test in 1999 they were commanding 76% of the nappy market — by 2001 this had increased to 89%.

We asked our Home Testers and their friends and family with babies to assess which nappy they thought was the best. They rated the nappies for leaking, keeping the baby dry, easy fastening, fit, shifting absorbent material and whether they disintegrated under duress, and then gave each brand an overall score.

The overwhelming favourite was **HUGGIES Ultra Dry Nappies**. Trialists found it less likely to leak, kept the baby significantly drier, and its absorbent material was less likely to shift.

KIMBIES VIP's and **TARGET Dry Soft Day & Night** nappies were the next most highly favoured, with

both scoring well for leakage. **KIMBIES VIP's** are particularly good at keeping the baby dry, and **TARGET Dry Soft Day & Night** for the absorbent material not shifting.

Those three are the most expensive nappies in the trial. If you're on a tighter budget, the cheaper **BEBES** and **SNUGGLERS** both do their job quite well, but both have areas that let them down.

Trialists noted that the **BEBES** have very sticky tabs

A NAPPY COMPROMISE

Cate Waugh and her partner Matt use both cloth and disposable nappies for their nine-month-old daughter Renee. Cate says both environmental and financial considerations influenced them to use cloth nappies when they can, but she prefers to use disposable nappies when they're out or away from home.

"I'd use cloth nappies more often except the idea of carrying dirty nappies around for several hours when I'm out is not something I want to dwell on."

As well as their convenience, Cate finds disposables usually fit better than cloth nappies. She also thinks disposables might be better for nappy rash, or at least reduce the amount of nappy changes needed to prevent it.

WHAT TO BUY

HUGGIES Ultra Dry Nappies	\$19.53 for 44
KIMBIES VIP's Nappies for Boys & Girls	\$8.29 for 18
TARGET Dry Soft Day & Night Nappies	\$16.50 for 40

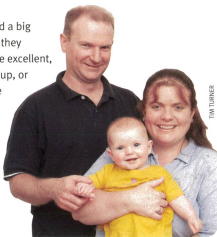


LITE WEGMANN

that sometimes stuck to the baby's skin: "Good nappy overall, but I didn't like the sticky fasteners as they stick to the baby's skin during changing."

Quite a number of trialists found **SNUGGLERS** to be a bit big, with some noting they were too high at the back, too wide or loose around the thighs, and that the nappy bunched between the legs: "I'd be happy to buy this nappy if I could get it in a smaller size." If you've got a larger baby, though, you might be happy with **SNUGGLERS**.

Cate and Matt noticed a big difference in the brands they trialled. While some were excellent, others leaked, bunched up, or didn't fit well around the back or legs. "I'd have thought there weren't too many new ideas in nappy technology, but some of the manufacturers don't seem to have worked it out at all," Cate says.



TIM TURNER

Profiles

Nappies in the *What to buy* list are profiled in rank order.

HUGGIES ULTRA DRY NAPPIES

Price: \$19.53 for 44 (44 cents per nappy for the 'Crawler' size). Our trialists had mostly positive comments to make about this nappy. They were very impressed with the Velcro fasteners, which didn't stick to the baby's skin and were readily refastened. Some trialists did note that some of the gel crystals leaked from the nappy onto the baby's skin when really wet.

TRIALIST COMMENTS

"Excellent performance — I would recommend this nappy to anyone."

"Perfect absorbency."

"Held a lot of moisture. Could leave the nappy on for a longer time without the baby's bottom getting too wet."



KIMBIES VIP'S NAPPIES FOR BOYS & GIRLS

Price: \$8.29 for 18 (46 cents per nappy for the 6–11 kg size). Trialists made many positive comments about this nappy.

TRIALIST COMMENTS

"Very good — moisture drawn away from baby's bottom."

"I would definitely buy this brand again. I'd use it day and night."

"Particularly like grip fasteners rather than sticky fasteners."



TARGET DRY SOFT DAY & NIGHT NAPPIES

Price: \$16.50 for 40 (41 cents per nappy for the 5–11 kg size). While a few trialists noted some of the absorbent material had escaped onto their baby's skin, and a few also noted the nappies were a bit loose around the legs, most of the comments made were positive.

TRIALIST COMMENTS

"Soft cover, snug fit around back. Would definitely buy these nappies."

"This is a fabulous nappy."

"Tags were hard to pull apart if too much force was used, and it would tear away from the nappy."



CHOICE HOME TESTER

THE TRIAL

Around 100 Home Testers and their relatives and friends with babies took part in this trial — thanks to all nappy changers and babies for your help. We tested all the brands of nappies on the market at the time of the trial.

The babies weighed 5–10 kg. Each brand of nappy was trialled around 60 times by approximately the same number of boys and girls. The primary nappy changer was asked to trial a particular nappy over two days, but use their regular cloth or disposable nappy at night.

PROFILES: TAMARA GRAHAM

Disposable vs cloth

COST

The table below shows our calculations of how much it'll cost you to use cloth or disposable nappies or a nappy service over the roughly two and a half years your baby will be wearing nappies. Not surprisingly, a nappy service is the most expensive option, but the difference between cloth and disposables is also quite significant, especially if you buy expensive nappies like the **HUGGIES**, **KIMBIES VIP'S** or **TARGET Dry Soft** that came top in this test. (The costs are based on the size we tested, so other sizes of disposables will have a different cost, though it'll still be relative from brand to brand.)

For cloth nappies, the type of washing machine doesn't make much difference to the cost, but using a dryer vs hanging them out, and washing in warm or hot water instead of cold do.

ENVIRONMENT

For years there's been an ongoing debate over which type of nappy has the least impact on the environment. While it might

decreased, the number of people using them has increased.

Parts of a disposable nappy are potentially biodegradable, but whether they do biodegrade and how long it takes depends on the type of landfill, and whether decomposition bacteria have access to air, water and light.

Cloth nappies also have an environmental cost. Growing cotton requires the use of pesticides and water, although new strains of genetically modified cotton claim to reduce the use of chemicals.

However, the most significant environmental impact of cloth nappies occurs during their use, rather than production or disposal. Washing and cleaning them requires water and energy that you don't use with disposable. You can minimise this by using cold water to wash and by drying on the line.

Unfortunately the expensive option of nappy services is probably the best from an environmental perspective, due to economies of scale. As a cheaper alternative and environmental compromise, you might consider using cloth nappies at home and disposables when you're out.

1 Home laundering (average 9 nappies per day)

		Soak	Wash temperature	Detergent*	Dry	Weekly cost (\$)**	Cost over 2½ years (\$)†
Front loader	Scenario 1	Warm water and Napisan	Cold	Duo Matic Concentrate	On the line	5.60	726
	Scenario 2	Warm water and Napisan	Warm	Duo Matic Concentrate	Electric dryer	6.55	852
	Scenario 3	Warm water and Napisan	Hot	Duo Matic Concentrate	Electric dryer	6.70	871
Top loader	Scenario 1	Warm water and Napisan	Cold	Duo Concentrate	On the line	5.85	761
	Scenario 2	Warm water and Napisan	Warm	Duo Concentrate	Electric dryer	6.80	882
	Scenario 3	Warm water and Napisan	Hot	Duo Concentrate	Electric dryer	7.40	965
2 Disposables (average 6 nappies per day)	Cheap brand					11.35	1474
	Expensive brand					19.30	2510
3 Nappy wash service (average 60 nappies per week)	Lowest quote					23.10	3003
	Highest quote					29.70	3861

seem clearcut that reusable cloth nappies would be a more environmentally friendly option than disposables, in fact there are environmental costs associated with using both.

Many conflicting studies have been published, but unfortunately not many independent ones. Most research has been funded or sponsored by a company or organisation with a barrow to push, be it disposable nappy companies or environmental groups.

It takes more raw materials to make disposables than cloth nappies. They also have an obvious impact on waste disposal and landfill — in 1999 it was estimated that using an average of six nappies a day over two and a half years produces about 734 kg of solid waste. Multiply that by the number of disposable-wearing babies born in Australia each year and that's a lot of disposable nappies taking up space in landfill. For just one baby you're talking about roughly 8000 nappies. And while it's possible the weight of the disposables themselves may have

* We used the detergents that were Best Buys in our last test for these calculations.

** Rounded to the nearest five cents.

† Rounded to the nearest dollar.

1 Home laundering

All the home laundering costs are based on washing nine nappies a day in a top loader or a front loader. (Cloth nappies need changing more often than disposables, which is why more nappies are used per day in this scenario than for the disposables, below.) Babies tend to use fewer nappies as they get older, so the total cost over 2½ years may be slightly less. When water is heated it's based on off-peak electricity costs.

2 Disposables

The price for the disposables is based on using six nappies a day of

the cheapest (27 cents per nappy) and most expensive (46 cents per nappy) in our trial.

3 Nappy wash service

This is based on 60 nappies per week, which is the number suggested by many of the nappy wash services we contacted for a quote in Sydney. As with home laundering, the cost may be slightly lower if the baby uses fewer nappies as they get older.

Look out for specials or discount introductory prices, or savings on long-term bookings. The price generally includes delivery and collection, as well as a nappy bin.

Brand / model (in rank order)

Brand / model (in rank order)	Overall score (%) [*]	Leakage score (%)	Dryness score (%)	Shifting score (%)	Disintegration score (%) ^{**}	Price per nappy (\$) [†]
HUGGIES Ultra Dry Nappies	88	96	92	95	79	0.44
KIMBIES VIP's Nappies for Boys & Girls	75	90	80	83	83	0.46
TARGET Dry Soft Day & Night Nappies	69	88	76	90	75	0.41
BEBES Premium	65	85	72	79	72	0.28
SHUGGLERS Nappies	64	77	72	79	73	0.27
NURSERYLAND Medium Nappies (A)	64	82	67	85	79	0.38
LULLABY Nappies for Boys & Girls	62	82	71	80	77	0.29
DRI BUBS Premium	60	78	64	82	75	0.30
COSIFITS Nappies for Boys & Girls	57	73	65	81	64	0.29
TARGET Daytime Nappies	54	74	57	74	70	0.27
COLES SAVINGS Disposable Nappies (A)	54	78	60	77	54	0.28
BI LO Disposable Nappies (B)	51	73	57	71	49	0.27

* This is a separate score, not a combination of the others.

** The percentage of nappies that didn't disintegrate.

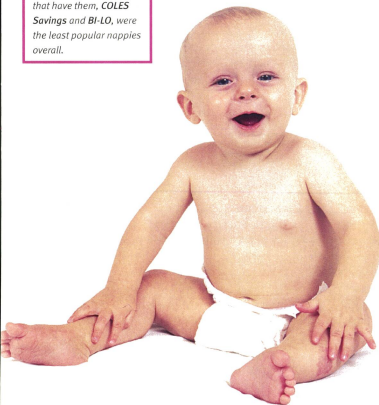
† Based on the recommended or average retail price for the pack size used in the trial or, for *Bebes*, the price we paid. Different pack sizes may make a difference to the price, as will different-sized nappies of the same brand.

(A) To be modified this year.

(B) To be discontinued in March/April this year.

WETNESS INDICATOR

Some nappies have a wetness indicator — a picture that fades when the nappy is wet. It's a handy feature for first-time nappy changers who might be a little unsure when a change is required. Unfortunately the two brands in the trial that have them, **COLES Savings** and **BI-LO**, were the least popular nappies overall.



LITE WEGMANN

TIP

If you buy disposable nappies, get into the habit of keeping the barcodes — some manufacturers have offers every now and then where you can redeem them for other products such as books.

HAPPY WITH CLOTH

Liz Murphy of Holt, ACT, almost exclusively uses terry-towelling nappies with pilchers for her fourth child, Lachlan, aged 12 months. The only time Liz considers using disposable nappies is when she's out of the house for a long period and may not be in a position to change a nappy as frequently as cloth ones require. She says she might use just two to four disposables a week.

"I use cloth for both financial and environmental reasons. I'm washing for a family of six, so six nappies a day doesn't make much difference, and there's more things I'd rather spend my money on than nappies that go into landfill."

Protecting the environment is important to Liz, and she's trying to teach her children to recycle as much as possible.

"The cost of disposables and the amount of rubbish created just seems silly to me in these times of reduce and recycle," she says.

Participating in the nappy trial only confirmed Liz's decision to use cloth nappies: "I found that some of the disposable nappies needed to be changed as frequently as cloth, and that was the only benefit I could previously see from using disposables."



RICHARD BRIGGS



You can't take it with you ...

But if you don't make a will you don't know where it'll all end up either.

IN A NUTSHELL

■ *Save your family and friends from hassle on top of grief, and make a will. Dying without one leaves a situation that's almost certainly not as straightforward as you might think.*

■ *You can do it without a lawyer, but in most cases it's safer to use one; it shouldn't cost much for a simple will.*

Helen Montgomery left her husband in 1999. Since they'd amicably divided their property, they didn't bother with lawyers and a legal divorce. Two years later Helen began a de facto relationship with George, who she referred to as her 'life partner'. Helen put off making a will — it didn't really matter, she thought, because she intended the house she owned to go to George after she died. She presumed this would happen because they were de facto partners.

Helen died in an accident, and since there was no will, state law took over. Suddenly Helen's husband lost his aversion to lawyers. George found himself in the Supreme Court, anxiety-ridden and defending his right to inherit the house he'd lived in for just under three years.

With a little foresight, Helen could have saved her partner a lot of trouble.

DO YOU NEED A WILL?

Compared to the decades of effort it takes most people to acquire their principal assets, it's remarkable that a significant percentage of Australians give little or no thought to the way their hard-won possessions will be shared out after they die. Few tasks are put off as much as making a will, but it's the only way to ensure your assets (called your 'estate') are distributed according to your wishes.

If you die without a will (called 'dying intestate') state/territory laws decide who gets your assets, usually passing them first to your surviving spouse and children. These rules apply to everyone, no matter what your individual situation or wishes are.

Even if you think you'd be happy to have your assets passed on according to the law, consider the possibility that people you never intended to benefit might end up with part of your estate. For instance, if you don't have children and die together with your spouse, a relative you repeatedly bailed out of substantial gambling debts may be rewarded because he's first in line under the intestacy rules. You used to say, "Over my dead body will he ever get another cent of my money," and that's precisely what happened.



Just as bad, you won't be able to assist a religious or charitable trust you supported all your life. Instead of an orderly legacy that reflects your values and wishes, you leave behind a mess for your loved ones to sort out.

The good news is that making a will is generally painless. Everyone over the age of 18 should have one, but there are certain times in your life when it's particularly important to make a will or revise your existing one:

- If you get married or intend to get married.
- If you separate from your spouse or de facto partner and you believe the separation will be permanent.
- If you divorce.
- If a person named in your will dies or becomes incapacitated.
- If you purchase a significant asset/investment.
- If you get involved in a new business, company or trust.

A VALID WILL

As long as it meets your needs, a will can be short or long and use complicated or simple language. In making a will, you must ensure that:

- The testator (the person making the will) has the mental capacity to understand that the will distributes their assets after they die, what those assets are, and generally how much they're worth. If there's any doubt, see a lawyer.
- The language is clear and unambiguous.



ILLUSTRATIONS: MARK TREMBLETT

- Another named person inherits your assets if your preferred beneficiary (the person who receives something in your will) dies before you.
 - You make arrangements for beneficiaries who are legal minors and unable to inherit until they reach 18 years of age.
 - It's witnessed by two independent witnesses, who aren't mentioned in the will and don't have a relationship to anyone who is named (such as a beneficiary's spouse). In some states/territories the rules about witnessing and signing have been relaxed, but it's recommended that the witnesses sign the will in the presence of each other and use the same pen.
- You can change your will by making a codicil (a legal addition), but in general it's best to make a new will. If you choose a codicil it's a good idea to get a lawyer to handle it.

A will can be written in a language other than English, but a certified translation will be required at the time of death. If it's written in English but the testator can't understand English, it's important to get legal advice to ensure there's no dispute about their intentions.

Some assets, such as superannuation and life insurance, can't be distributed in a will. If you have a super entitlement, make sure you tell the super fund who you want to benefit after your death.

DO YOU NEED A LAWYER?

Nowadays you can buy inexpensive do-it-yourself wills kits. For small estates, where the distribution is

uncomplicated (such as leaving a home and financial assets to your immediate family) this might be satisfactory, but in general it's best to get a lawyer (or a trustee company) to prepare your will — it's often more complicated than you'd expect to get everything just right.

For a straightforward will the legal fees will be relatively modest, sometimes as little as \$200, and you have the peace of mind of knowing your real intentions will be carried out. Costs vary, so shop around and ask the lawyer for a quote. Of course, the more complicated the will, the higher the fees.

It's especially important to see a lawyer if you want to disinherit someone who would, in normal circumstances, be entitled to a share of your assets. You can't stop that person from disputing your decision in court after you die, but a lawyer should help reduce the chances of a successful legal challenge.

Leaving assets directly to another person is only one way of distributing assets through a will. Another strategy is to include a trust as part of the will (called a 'testamentary trust'). Each family's situation is different and trusts aren't for everyone. For example, a trust is useful if you want to provide for a child with a disability or protect assets where a beneficiary may divorce. They may also be helpful for tax purposes, such as minimising capital gains tax. Lawyers who work in this area will be able to explain how they can prepare a trust and will that meet your needs.

EVERY WILL NEEDS AN EXECUTOR

Think of the executor as someone who stands in your shoes after you die. It's their responsibility to carry out the instructions in your will, including the distribution of assets to beneficiaries. They must also collect all the assets (and if necessary have them valued), identify and pay any debts, arrange to file tax returns, and get probate (this is the legal process required before most major assets can be distributed — see page 34).





It sounds like a burdensome job description (and sometimes it is) but in general, if the estate isn't complicated, it's common to appoint a trusted friend, your spouse or an adult child. If the estate is complex or your family dynamics necessitate an independent executor, it's a good idea to get professional advice about the most suitable candidate, which may be a lawyer, accountant or trustee company. You can choose joint executors, but be careful that they can work together. Whoever you choose, make sure they're comfortable with the responsibility.

Where there are children under the age of 18 or beneficiaries who can't make legal decisions for themselves (such as someone with a mental incapacity), the executor will also have to act as trustee until the assets can be passed on to that person. A trustee is a person who holds the assets in 'trust' for the beneficiary, and owes a legal/financial duty to this person. In this case it usually makes sense for the executor to get legal and financial advice.



TAKING CARE OF CHILDREN

Most parents give serious thought to what will happen to their children if one or both of them die. If you have young children you can use your will to name the person(s) (called the 'guardian') who you'd prefer to take the responsibility for their welfare until they reach 18. Unless there's a dispute, the law generally recognises your child's other parent as the guardian. Otherwise a court will decide guardianship – in this case the choice you make in your will is considered but isn't binding.

Even if you're happy for the surviving parent to be guardian, you should consider what will happen if they die before you, or perhaps at the same time. For this reason it's best for both parents to agree on a prospective guardian. The person you choose should be genuinely concerned for your children and have appropriate parenting skills. It's a good idea to candidly discuss these issues with the prospective guardian to

ensure they're prepared to accept the appointment. It's also prudent to name an alternative guardian, in case your first choice is unavailable or changes their mind.

If you have sufficient assets you can also provide for your children's financial needs by way of a trust, which can be administered by someone other than the guardian. For example, you might think your brother would make an exemplary parent, but your best friend is more astute at dealing with financial issues. Make sure they can work together, or you may be setting up a long-term conflict.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND DE FACTOS

Marriage revokes any pre-existing will (unless it was explicitly made in anticipation of the marriage) so it's important to make a new will when you marry. On the other hand, a divorce doesn't automatically revoke an existing will.

If you've been divorced or are thinking of it, get legal advice about the status of any existing will. In some states and territories the divorce cancels any distribution to your ex-husband/wife, together with their appointment as an executor, trustee or guardian. If you want to make a new will after a divorce, make sure it takes effect as soon as the divorce is final. In fact it's a good idea to review your will at the time of the separation — check with a lawyer.

A de facto spouse is a person you treat as your partner, but who you're not legally married to. States and territories have laws that set out the criteria for deciding whether a person is in a legal de facto relationship. Some of the issues considered include the length of the relationship and whether there are children. In some states, same-sex couples are also considered de facto couples.

Depending on the law in each state, if you die without a valid will, your de facto spouse may not inherit any of your assets. This is just another good reason to make a will.

GETTING PROBATE

This is the way the courts recognise the validity of your will and the executor's authority to administer the estate. Following the 'grant of probate' the executor can collect the assets, pay any debts, and then distribute the estate according to your wishes. Probate may not be required if the estate is small or assets are in joint names.

Of course there won't be any opportunity for your wishes to be carried out if the executor can't find your will. It's a pain when people hide their will to keep it from prying eyes, but neglect to tell the executor where to find it. In that case it might be presumed that there's no will or that you destroyed it. If you use a lawyer or trustee company they'll usually hold the will and give you a copy. ■

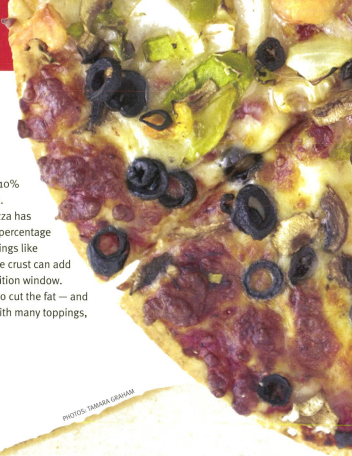
Lighter cheese, lighter pizza?

DOMINO's pizza has a pizza first with its new **DOMINO's Delight mozzarella** cheese. "50% less fat. Same great taste. Guaranteed!" shouts the promotional blurb.

We've got no quibble with its nutrition credentials: **Delight** is claimed to be only 10% fat, compared to regular mozzarella's 22% — and that's more than a 50% reduction.

However, the big but is that the cheese isn't always the biggest fat problem a pizza has — which other toppings you choose and how fatty they are will determine what the percentage reduction in fat really is. In other words, fatty meats (like pepperoni or bacon), toppings like sundried tomatoes in oil, mayonnaise and special options like extra layers of cheese crust can add so much fat that much of what you save on the **Delight** cheese could go out the nutrition window.

Now don't get us wrong: if you're going to eat pizza, **Delight mozzarella** will help to cut the fat — and if you're choosing lower-fat toppings like veggies, the reduction will be significant. With many toppings, though, it won't be as much as 50% overall.



Cheesy grin

You can research anything if you get the sponsorship, and Dr Len Fisher, a physicist at the University of Bristol, recently turned his attention to what makes a perfect cheese sandwich.

He used cutting-edge technology for his investigations. Volunteers were attached to an electronic machine called an MSNose and sat with a plastic sampling tube up one nostril as they chomped their way through the test sandwiches. The MSNose took a sample of each breath, analysed the cheesy aromas, and measured their concentrations. (And no, the report doesn't say how the volunteers thought the sandwiches actually tasted.)

Dr Fisher found the thicker the cheese the tastier the sandwich — but only up to a certain thickness that depended on the type of cheese. For cheddar, the tastiest thickness was 2.8 mm — thicker than that didn't give a tastier sandwich.

Another finding (which won't be a surprise to regular cheese sandwich eaters) was that a thin coat of butter or margarine on the bread improved the cheesy flavour. Apparently the fat coats the tongue and holds the cheesy flavour in the mouth for longer.

And cheese and tomato make a perfect match. It turns out that tomato contains 2-methyl propanal, which also happens to be one of the flavoursome chemicals in cheese and so boosts the cheesy flavour.

And the research sponsors? None other than the British Cheese Board.



PHOTOS: TAMARA GRAHAM



COMPROMISE ... OF A SORT

According to the label, **SUNBLEST Whole and White** bread "is the perfect compromise for when the family wants to eat white, but Mum wants the natural goodness of wholemeal".

Don't be fooled, Mum! This bread has 2.6 g of fibre per serve (two slices, weighing 68.5 g) — only 0.7 g more fibre than the same weight of white bread. The same-sized serve of wholemeal bread has 4.5 g of fibre — and has much more of the nutritionally valuable antioxidants and phytochemicals found in whole grains.

www.choice.com.au
CHOICEBOOKS
Australia's Consumer Information

How to Clean Practically Anything

SYDNEY PEMBERTON

2nd
edition

HOW TO CLEAN PRACTICALLY ANYTHING

NEW EDITION!

Sydney Pemberton

Learn how to clean so efficiently that you'll spend less time doing it! What's new in this edition?

- A section on recycling.
- Information about the care and cleaning of babies' and children's products.
- Green tips.
- Advice on cleaning newer household products like DVD players and plasma-screen TVs.

And it still gives you:

- A household cleaning calendar.
- A stain-removal table for over 70 common household stains *plus* a special stain-removing chart for carpets.
- Advice on finding and hiring a cleaner.
- Cleaning product recipes.

Plus cleaning advice on everything from CD players to lace and feathers, the microwave to the kitchen sink.

Whatever you need to clean, *How to Clean Practically Anything* offers practical, efficient and easy solutions.

\$18.00

CODE: HCP2

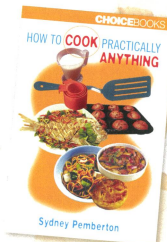
By the same author:

HOW TO COOK PRACTICALLY ANYTHING

From broche to steak, stir-fry to a roast, whether you're an 'every night' cook or just starting out, you'll find something of use in this book. Delicious recipes and down-to-earth techniques, advice on cuts of meat, equipment and cooking terms — it's all in here. The perfect beginners' guide and companion to *How to Clean Practically Anything*.

\$19.80

CODE: COOK



THE CHOICE WINE BUYING GUIDE 2004

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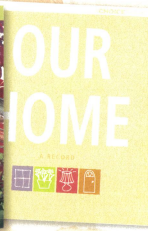
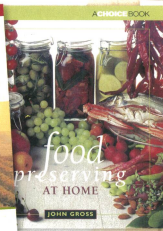
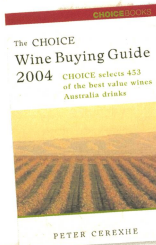
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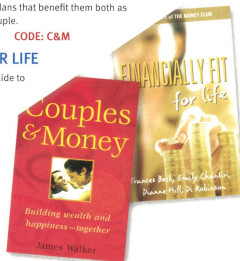
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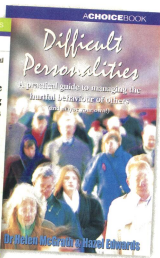
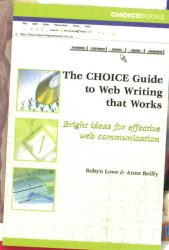
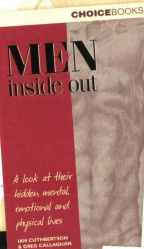
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pana

BUT WHY ME?

David West

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BUT WHY ME?

With so many people being retrenched every year, psychologist David West's book on facing up to and coping with redundancy is both long overdue and timely. If you've fallen prey, there's hope. This book offers guidance on refocusing your life, whether by getting fair payout entitlements or finding another position.

\$20.00 CODE: BWME

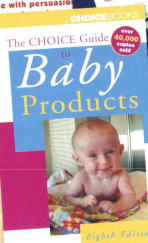
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Banks can waive fees

Elizabeth Hurtt, who works for CHOICE, needed to change the name on her ST GEORGE business account. She wasn't impressed when branch staff said this simple change involved closing down the account, opening a new one, and paying a \$37.50 fee.

Elizabeth thought she'd follow CHOICE's advice (*Prepare to haggle*, March 2004) and try to get a better deal. "I told the bank I wasn't prepared to pay this fee, and that I'd sooner close the account," she says.

After a few moments' thought the staff member agreed to waive the fee. "Apart from the time I spent filling in the forms, the account was sorted out without any further cost or hassle," Elizabeth says. "It goes to show, nothing ventured, nothing gained!"



DANIELA LIPSON

SPOTLIGHT ON MORTGAGE BROKERS

Check out the first issue of our new magazine, *CHOICE Money & Rights* — you received a free copy with this issue of CHOICE. Its report on mortgage brokers includes a 'shadow shop' and an investigation into the services they provide.

Time is up for financial services

The deadline to get an Australian financial services licence has now passed. From March 11, 2004, any business advising on or offering financial products requires a licence or needs to be authorised to represent a licence holder.

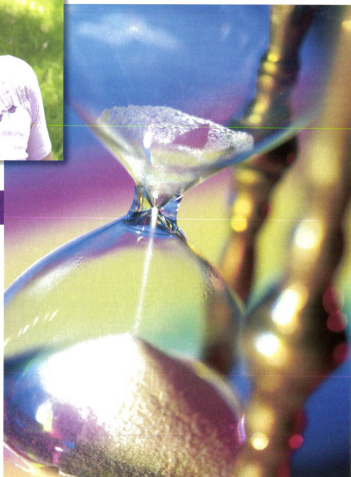
The act should improve consumer protection, bringing many finance providers under the same rules. You'll get better information to help you decide on products, while companies must give cooling-off periods, have proper complaints procedures and belong to an approved external dispute resolution scheme. Staff who give advice must meet minimum training requirements, and the advice they can provide depends on the type of licence they have. This affects:

- Banks, building societies and credit unions.
- Life and general insurance companies.
- Insurance agents and brokers.
- Managed investment scheme operators.
- Superannuation funds.
- Securities dealers.
- Financial planners and advisers.
- Futures brokers and advisers.
- Foreign exchange dealers.

But the act doesn't cover everything — for example, credit providers and mortgage brokers don't need a licence, as they operate under the national uniform credit code.

Look for these documents when deciding on financial products:

- Financial services guide: this includes information about the provider, their services, how they're generally paid and customer complaints procedures.



- Statement of advice: personal financial advice should be in a written statement, including the information it's based on and how the provider is paid for recommending any particular product.

- Product disclosure statement: this includes information such as the product's features, fees, commissions, risks and benefits.

Financial services providers operating without a licence after the deadline may be fined up to \$22,000 and/or jailed for two years.

You can check if a financial service provider is licensed by contacting ASIC's infoline on 1300 300 630 or by going to its consumer website at www.fido.asic.gov.au.

DIGITAL *on the cheap?* It's an option

IN A NUTSHELL

- Analogue TV broadcasts ('regular' TV) are scheduled to end late 2008 or thereabouts, so at some point TV viewers will need to get a digital set-top box or a digital TV.
- If you're happy with the quality of your analogue TV reception and can live without digital TV's bells and whistles, it might pay to wait before you buy.
- If you'd like to go digital now without spending too much, the set-top boxes we tested were in general technically good. However, one of them might not be a good choice if you live in a poor reception area.

WHAT'S A DIGITAL SET-TOX BOX?

- A set-top box receives digital picture and sound signals broadcast from a digital TV network and decodes these into signals your current (analogue) TV can handle.
- It's one of the cheapest ways to watch digital TV.

Countdown to the future: gasp, shock, horror — the end of TV as we know it!

Supposedly around the end of 2008 the familiar analogue free-to-air TV broadcast system we take for granted will be phased out — although some pundits think analogue will be around a lot longer.

Whenever this finally happens, free-to-air TV will be broadcast in digital format only. This means most consumers will need either a digital set-top box to plug into a standard analogue TV or an integrated digital TV.

GOOD RECEPTION?

Since a large number of consumers will probably enter the digital TV world with a set-top box, we compared the cheapest model (under \$450) of each brand currently on the market.

We tested how well the set-top boxes received weak signals and coped with interference: all models handled these tests well.

We also checked for so-called 'fall off the cliff' conditions: digital receivers function perfectly up to a point, but if noise interference or changes in signal strength (due to reflections from mountains, buildings or low-flying aircraft) cause enough picture pixellation, a sudden and dramatic loss of picture results.

So measuring various 'fall off the cliff' conditions helps pick models that won't cope in areas where reception is poor.

If you currently experience very poor reception, avoid the **DIGITAL VIEW DSD-103** — it fell off the cliff much earlier than the other models. Otherwise, its technical performance was OK (although the worst of the models tested), and it would be fine in areas free from severe ghosting and/or 'snow' interference in reception.

EASY TO UNDERSTAND, EASY TO USE?

Some models have their ease of use limitations. The **PANASONIC** is very compact, which might appeal to some, but it doesn't have any function buttons on it, perhaps because of its relatively tiny size. Having these on the front panel as well as on the remote is useful if you want to perform basic functions as you're walking by or can't find the remote. This model was also let down by being comparatively difficult to tune and to set up frequently used channels.

Fortunately several of the other set-top boxes earned applause for their ease of use, with the **IKUSI**, **NEXTWAVE**, **TRIO** and **TOPFIELD** being the best. The **TRIO** and



PHOTOS: TAMARA GRAHAM

The digital future of free-to-air TV, but do you really need one now?

TOPFIELD in particular have very good remote controls, easy-to-understand onscreen menus and information, and are easy to tune and to set up frequently used channels.

BUT IS NOW THE TIME TO BUY?

Digital TV broadcasting has been available in most major Australian cities since 2001, and at the time of writing most Australians should have access to it.

But do you need digital TV now? That's up to you and how much you value the specific benefits of digital TV. You'll probably get improved picture reception and sound, and you might find the range of new features offered by digital technology attractive enough to want to go digital now — see *The main attractions*, page 43.

HOW MUCH?

A set-top box combined with a regular analogue TV will be the cheapest option for the digital future. Prices currently start from around \$250 for a standard-definition (SD) set-top box (see *High or low definition?*, below, for more on this). The full-featured widescreen digital TV option is likely to set you back around \$4000.

The cost of SD set-top boxes has already dropped significantly in the past couple of years (around \$500–\$700 two years ago). Some technology reviewers think prices will drop even further — perhaps almost to the level of very cheap DVD players. They'll need to, otherwise many families with two or even three TVs will struggle to afford the digital TV revolution.

HIGH OR LOW DEFINITION?

All the set-top boxes we tested were standard-definition models. Because the picture quality of SD broadcasts is equivalent to a DVD, most people will find SD pictures perfectly acceptable.

However, the government has said digital TV networks must broadcast 1040 hours of programming per year in high definition (HD).

According to Digital Broadcasting Australia, HD pictures may have up to six times the improvement in detail — but one catch is that you need an expensive HD-compatible TV to view HD broadcasts.



IKUSI TRI-702
\$399



TEAC DV-B300
\$299



TOPFIELD TF3000T
\$349



TRIO HTN-9000
\$249 **BEST BUY**



NEXTWAVE TDR-3100
\$299



STRONG SRT 5300
\$349

What to look for

All the models tested have composite video and S-video output (the latter gives slightly better picture quality). See the table (page 42) to find out which models have the following features.

- Component video output gives better picture quality than either composite or S-video output. The signal is split into three parts, with each part having its own cable (red, green and blue connectors). Only relatively new TVs tend to have component video input.
- A set-top-box with RF output might be useful if your TV is relatively old and doesn't have composite, S-video or component video sockets. An RF socket is where you'd connect a 'rabbit ears' antenna to a typical TV.
- Favourite channels grouping is a useful way of organising the channels you watch the most. It saves moving through channels you don't want.
- A previous channel option is useful and can save your fingers. It lets you flick immediately back to the last channel you were watching without any channel navigation.
- Remote controls that also operate your TV help save your coffee table from clutter. Some manufacturers provide a list of compatible TVs, others advise you just to try and see if the remote works with your TV.
- Independent picture control means picture attributes (brightness, contrast, etc) can be controlled through the set-top box.

WHAT TO BUY

IKUSI TRI-702	\$399
TEAC DV-B300	\$299
TOPFIELD TF3000T	\$349
TRIO HTN-9000 BEST BUY	\$249
NEXTWAVE TDR-3100	\$299
STRONG SRT 5300	\$349

Brand / model (in rank order)	PERFORMANCE				5 FEATURES					
	1 Overall score (%)	2 Ease of use score (%)	3 Technical performance score (%)	4 Standby energy score (%)	Component video output	RF output	Favourite channels grouping	Previous channel	Remote works with some TVs	Picture controls
IKUSI TRI-702	73	76	74	50		✓	✓			✓
TEAC DV-8300 (A)	73	67	85	70	✓		(C)	✓		
TOPFIELD TF3000T	73	78	84	10			✓	✓		✓
TRIO HTN-9000 (A) (B)	73	79	83	5			✓	✓		✓
NEXTWAVE TDR-3100	72	76	86	5			✓	✓		✓
STRONG SRT 5300	70	72	86	10		✓	✓	✓		✓
DGTEC DH-2000B	67	69	82	5	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
DIGITAL VIEW DSD-103 (A)	63	68	69	10		✓	✓	✓		✓
THOMSON DT1500AU	62	60	85	5			✓	✓	✓	✓
PANASONIC TU-CT20A	58	52	74	50		✓			✓	

* Rounded up to the next centimetre, all protruding parts except the cord included.

** Prices are recommended retail, as supplied by manufacturers in February 2004.

ns Not stated.

(A) This model has been or is about to be discontinued, but you may still find it in shops.

(B) A technically similar model, the XMS007, is sold by Strathfield stores in NSW, NT, SA, Victoria and WA, and Car Sound in Queensland.

(C) As a substitute, you can temporarily remove non-favourites using the channel skip feature.



What about my antenna?

Good news. If you currently enjoy good analogue reception from your existing antenna, it should provide you with good digital reception as well, provided it's in good repair and is connected with good-quality coaxial cable.

The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) has taken steps to ensure that most consumers shouldn't need to replace their antenna for digital reception. However, some old VHF antennas in metropolitan areas may need to be adjusted or replaced to receive certain channels.

For more information, talk to your local retailer or antenna specialist, or go to www.dba.org.au; under 'reception guides' click on 'houses' or 'home units'.

If it ain't broke why fix it?

Not everyone's convinced the digital revolution is a good thing — some commentators are still scratching their heads wondering 'why bother?'. They point out that the case for change is not overwhelming: what's so wrong with Australia's current analogue broadcast system? And are the benefits of the new digital technology too few and too gimmicky to justify the enormous costs?

In fact there isn't anything wrong with the analogue system, but the government has decided we should go digital anyway.

As a relatively late adopter of colour TV, Australia got the best available analogue technology, the PAL system. Early adopters, like the US, went for the inferior NTSC system — sometimes derided as the 'Never Twice the Same Colour' system. The difference in quality between these systems might, in part, explain why there's been quite a fast rate of digital TV take-up by US consumers — the improvement is much more significant.

So how much is the move to digital likely to cost in Australia? It's been roughly estimated to be around \$16 billion. The cost that broadcasters will incur is thought to be around the \$3–4 billion mark, while consumers collectively are expected to spend a ballpark \$12 billion on digital technologies.

Then there are concerns about elements of the Federal Government's digital broadcasting policy. Access is one hot issue. With digital there's heaps more bandwidth room to play with, so there's potential for many more networks and other digital services, but who's going to get broadcast licences? Defining the kind of digital services we want is another issue.

The government has adopted a 'business as usual' approach, particularly for the early years (up to 2006). Essentially this means digital broadcasting will look very much like analogue till then — the same old TV networks doing more or less the same old thing.

What's planned for digital TV after that time? CHOICE hopes we'll see at least one new network entrant to increase the diversity of media choices in Australia.

We'd also like the government to allow more experimentation. Current digital broadcasting policies limit the options that digital broadcasting makes possible. A preferable strategy would be to put options out there and let consumers tell the market what they want.

SPECIFICATIONS

Dimensions (W x D, cm)*	Warranty (years)	Origin	Manufacturer / distributor	Price (\$)**
18 x 25	1	Korea	Ikusi	399
14 x 27	1	Korea	Teac	299
16 x 21	1	Korea	Topfield	349
14 x 28	1	Korea	Trio	249
16 x 23	1	Korea	NextWave	299
14 x 29	1	Korea	Strong	349
16 x 30	1	Korea	Dgtect	299
12 x 23	1	ns	Digital View	299
14 x 17	1	Taiwan	Shirio	289
14 x 17	1	UK	Panasonic	439

1 Overall score

This is made up of a combination of the following scores:

- Ease of use (60%).
- Technical performance (30%).
- Energy consumption on standby (10%).

We gave more weight to ease of use because the boxes were quite similar for technical performance.

2 Ease of use score

This is a combination of the following attributes:

- Remote control (50%).
- Onscreen menus and information (20%).
- Tuning and setting frequently watched channels (20%).
- Front panel controls (10%).

3 Technical performance score

We assessed the set-top boxes' ability to work with weak signals and whether they're likely to cope in poor reception areas. We also factored in their ability to cope with interference from other electrical devices close by.

4 Energy use on standby

We measured the power used by each set-top box in standby mode or equivalent (when the set-top box has been turned off by the remote control but is still connected to power) — the higher the score, the less energy wasted.

5 Features

See *What to look for*, page 41, for explanations of these features.

The main attractions

The major features of digital TV include (or might eventually include):

- Better reception:** No more ghosting or 'snow', so you'll get clearer pictures. If your analogue reception is very good, the difference will be marginal, but if it's very poor you may not be able to receive digital TV at all. This is one reason why analogue TV may well be around after 2008.
- You'll also get better audio** — CD quality on standard-definition broadcasts and Dolby on some high-definition broadcasts. To make the most of this you'll probably need to feed the audio through a sound system.
- TV programs in widescreen** (16:9) aspect ratio. Conventional TVs have a squarish screen, with a ratio of 4:3 width to height (called the aspect ratio). However, the human field of vision is more rectangular or envelope-shaped than box-like, so compared to this standard 4:3 aspect ratio, a widescreen format (16:9) better resembles the way we naturally see. And TV in widescreen format can provide more onscreen action, depending on how particular programs have been filmed.

If you don't have a widescreen TV and so use a set-top box with a conventional 4:3 analogue TV, you can either cut down the picture to completely fit the screen (thereby losing some of the onscreen action) or set it up for widescreen display — you'll get a smaller picture with black bands at the top and bottom of the screen.

- Multi-channel programming** on ABC and SBS will enable these broadcasters to introduce extra programs that you can watch on a different channel from the regular free-to-air programming. (Government policy currently doesn't allow the commercial networks to do this.) Up to the end of June last year the ABC was broadcasting two extra digital networks: ABC Kids and another dedicated to youth (Fly TV) — they've now been axed due to funding difficulties. SBS currently offers

WeatherWatch and various foreign-language news programs on its digital network. While multi-channelling could expand viewing options, so far there's not all that much available.

- Closed captions** are great if you're hearing-impaired or when other people don't want to hear the TV. They're available with all prime-time programs. Much like regular subtitles in most ways, closed captions have the advantage of also captioning sound effects. The Australian standard for set-top boxes isn't mandatory, but says all receivers should have closed captioning decoding and display capabilities. If you buy one that doesn't (see the table for two models) you'll need an analogue TV with teletext to view the captions.

- Onscreen program and channel guides** to save you having to buy a TV guide (limited channel information in some areas).

- Multiviews and enhancements** with some programs. The selling point here is that you'll be able to tailor delivery of certain broadcasts to suit your own tastes. For example, some sporting events may allow you to choose the camera angles and the commentary you prefer and allow you to view extra statistical and other information.

- Interactive TV (iTV)** will provide opportunities for viewers to interact directly with the broadcast. One-way iTV will deliver extra program information that you can opt to view or not. Two-way iTV will enable viewers to send information back, potentially letting you participate in polls and surveys, play along with quiz shows, interact with sports shows, hire movies (video on demand); it may even provide gambling and betting services. You can expect to be charged for some interactive services.

- Datacasting services** could encompass a broad range of digital data applications such as email and web browsing, banking and other e-commerce activities, radio broadcasts and local community information.

CRYSTAL-CLEAR

Five more dishwashers added to our ongoing series of tests.

IN A NUTSHELL

Four out of the five new models tested worked well enough to get into our What to buy list, with **WESTINGHOUSE** and **ELECTROLUX** models entering the field as the overall top performers.

Two of the new models tested have an auto-sense function, which adjusts the wash intensity to how dirty it senses the load to be — but one of them used more water and energy to do it.



Our technical staff have been hard at work again, testing five new dishwashers to add to our ongoing series of dishwasher reports.

The first instalment was in the Jan/Feb 2004 issue of CHOICE.

Two of the models in this test have an auto-sense function, which in theory means the machine will sense how dirty the load is and adjust the wash intensity accordingly. When a machine has this feature we test it on that cycle, as we think that's what most people would do — for all other machines we test on their 'normal' cycle.

The two machines with auto-sense, the **AEG Favorit 60820** and the **WESTINGHOUSE Virtuoso SB925**, worked well in different areas. The **WESTINGHOUSE Virtuoso** washed the dishes well using auto-sense, but it used more water and energy to do it than most other machines. This brought its overall score down enough for us not to include it in the *What to buy* list. (If you bought one and used the 'normal' wash rather than auto-sense, you might well get similar results to the other **WESTINGHOUSE** models on test.)

The **AEG** washed nearly as well but used a lot less water and energy in doing it, comparing favourably with many other machines on their 'normal' wash. So if you like the sound of auto-sense and environmental concerns are important to you, the **AEG** would be the model to choose.

WHAT TO BUY

A **Best Buy** is a good performer whose purchase and running costs combined are among the lowest in the test.

The **LG** and **BLANCO** models in the Jan/Feb 2004 *What to buy* list are still good dishwashers, but we've dropped them from the list now because so many of the newly tested models are a little better.

Similar models listed (linked by a square bracket) are technically the same and will get the same scores in our tests, but may have different features or finishes (such as stainless steel vs white).

New	ELECTROLUX Gallery ESI6110X	\$1499
New	WESTINGHOUSE SB915WJ (white)	\$999
New	WESTINGHOUSE SB915KJ (black)	\$999
New	WESTINGHOUSE SB915SJ (stainless steel)	\$1099
	MAYTAG Jetclean MJD2000AAW	\$1099
	MAYTAG Jetclean MJD3000AAW	\$1299
New	AEG Favorit 60820	\$1899
New	WESTINGHOUSE SB907WJ (white) TEST BUY	\$899
New	WESTINGHOUSE SB907SJ (stainless steel)	\$999
	WHIRLPOOL 6ADP5656WHM	\$1399
	WHIRLPOOL 6ADG7554WHM	\$1695

MASTERFILE

PROFILES OF NEW MODELS

The new models added to the *What to buy* list since our Jan/Feb 2004 article are profiled here; see that issue for profiles of the other models in the list (or go to www.choiceextra.com.au and click on Jan/Feb 04 under 'dishwashers' in the index). Prices are those provided by manufacturers in January 2004. 

ELECTROLUX GALLERY ESI6110X

Price: \$1499

GOOD POINTS

- Equal top score overall; excellent drying performance and very easy to use.
- Fast wash option.
- Program progress indicator.
- Salt dispenser for water softening in hard-water areas.

BAD POINTS

- Comparatively expensive.
- Relatively noisy.
- Basket design lacks versatility.

AEG FAVORIT 60820

Price: \$1899

GOOD POINTS

- Excellent drying performance.
- Top score for ease of use, with easy-to-use controls.
- Versatile basket design.
- Fast wash option.
- Time remaining display and program progress indicator.
- Auto-sense cycle.
- Salt dispenser for water softening.

BAD POINTS

- Comparatively expensive.

WESTINGHOUSE SB915WJ

Price: \$999 (white)

WESTINGHOUSE SB915KJ

Price: \$999 (black)

WESTINGHOUSE SB915J

Price: \$1099 (stainless steel)

GOOD POINTS

- Equal top score overall; excellent drying performance and very easy to use.
- Time remaining indicator and program progress display.

BAD POINTS

- None to mention

WESTINGHOUSE SB907WJ

Price: \$899 (white) 

WESTINGHOUSE SB907J

Price: \$999 (stainless steel)

GOOD POINTS

- Excellent drying performance.
- Very easy to use.
- Program progress indicator.

BAD POINTS

- None to mention.



Electrolux Gallery ESI6110X



Westinghouse SB915



AEG Favorit 60820



Westinghouse SB907

PHOTOS: TAMARA GRAHAM

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

For information such as what to look for when buying a dishwasher, see *CHOICE*, Jan/Feb 2004, or if you're a personal *CHOICE* subscriber, go to www.choiceextra.com.au and click on Jan/Feb 04 under 'dishwashers' in the index. You also have access there to our interactive *Compare-a-dishwasher* feature: just type in your preferences and it'll find models to match them.

If you don't have the Jan/Feb issue or access to the internet, call our Consumer Services people toll-free on 1800 069 552 and we'll send you a copy (obviously we can't send you a *Compare-a-dishwasher*).



ORGANISED CUTLERY

New dishwashers often have a cutlery basket with a slotted lid to separate the pieces, as shown in the photo, top left. If you find it a nuisance to put the cutlery in the separate slots rather than just throwing a handful in, you don't have to: the lid folds up and you can drop the cutlery straight into the basket.

Similarly, some models have a tray for cutlery that slides out above the top basket (see bottom left); each piece of cutlery has to be laid individually between the tines. A straw poll around the *CHOICE* office found a division of views on its merits: some found it too finicky, while others liked it as it lets you organise the cutlery to make putting it away easier. If you don't like the idea, check that the model you're interested in also comes with a normal cutlery basket as an alternative.

PERFORMANCE

Brand / model (in rank order)	1 Overall score (%)	2 Washing score (%)	3 Drying score (%)	4 Ease of use score (%)	5 Energy efficiency score (%)	6 Water efficiency score (%)	5 Energy used (kWh)	6 Water used (L)	7
# ELECTROLUX Gallery ES6110	82	80	97	91	62	69	1.58	22	5
# WESTINGHOUSE SB915WJ (white)	82	77	97	90	63	77	1.55	19	4
# WESTINGHOUSE SB915KJ (black)	82	77	97	90	63	77	1.55	19	4
# WESTINGHOUSE SB915SJ (ss)	82	77	97	90	63	77	1.55	19	4
# MAYTAG Jetclean MJD2000AAW	81	75	88	97	68	77	1.37	19	4
# MAYTAG Jetclean MJD3000AAW	81	75	88	97	68	77	1.37	19	4
# AEG Favorit 60820	80	72	96	100	64	66	1.51	23	4
# WESTINGHOUSE SB907WJ (white)	80	75	94	90	63	75	1.53	20	4
# WESTINGHOUSE SB907SJ (ss)	80	75	94	90	63	75	1.53	20	4
WHIRLPOOL 6ADP5656WHM	80	75	79	88	82	81	0.91	17	4
WHIRLPOOL 6ADG7554WHM	80	75	79	88	82	81	0.91	17	4
BLANCO BFDW640W	79	80	90	84	62	70	1.58	21	5
BLANCO B5DW640S (ss)	79	80	90	84	62	70	1.58	21	5
BLANCO BFDW650S (ss)	79	80	90	84	62	70	1.58	21	5
LG LD14AW2	79	77	93	72	70	77	1.31	19	4
LG LD14AT2	79	77	93	72	70	77	1.31	19	4
BOSCH SG54072AU	77	77	94	69	63	69	1.52	22	4
BOSCH SGU4025AU	77	77	94	69	63	69	1.52	22	4
# WESTINGHOUSE Virtuoso SB925SJ	78	78	94	90	57	57	1.75	26	4
FISHER & PAYKEL Dishdrawer DD603 (ww) (A)	75	75	94	80	53	60	1.88 (A)	25 (A)	4
FISHER & PAYKEL Dishdrawer DD603i (A)	75	75	94	80	53	60	1.88 (A)	25 (A)	4
FISHER & PAYKEL Dishdrawer DD603 (ss) (A)	75	75	94	80	53	60	1.88 (A)	25 (A)	4
FISHER & PAYKEL Dishdrawer DD603 (m) (A)	75	75	94	80	53	60	1.88 (A)	25 (A)	4
FISHER & PAYKEL Nautilus DW920 (www)	75	71	90	66	68	75	1.36	20	5
FISHER & PAYKEL Nautilus DW920 (BK)	75	71	90	66	68	75	1.36	20	5
FISHER & PAYKEL Nautilus DW920 (ss)	75	71	90	66	68	75	1.36	20	5
ASKO D3100	74	69	81	55	77	87	1.06	15	4
ASKO D3100 (ss)	74	69	81	55	77	87	1.06	15	4
KLEENMAID DW17W (B)	74	60	88	89	64	74	1.49	20	4
KLEENMAID DW17X (B)	74	60	88	89	64	74	1.49	20	4
WHIRLPOOL 6ADP8540IX	74	70	80	55	85	78	0.79	18	5
WHIRLPOOL 6ADP5540	74	70	80	55	85	78	0.79	18	5

For people with a disability

An occupational therapist from the Independent Living Centre, NSW, assessed the dishwashers to find out which ones are most suitable for people with a disability.

■ For those with impaired vision, the **WESTINGHOUSE** models would be easiest to use — they have a one-touch start, and the **SB925SJ** model has an internal light when the door's opened. The baskets also have contrasting components.

■ If you have problems with your hands or wrists, look for a light door with a latch that's easy to open and close, controls that are easy to turn and press, baskets that slide in and out easily and a filter with handles. The **AEG** and **FISHER & PAYKEL Dishdrawer** are the most suitable.

■ The **WESTINGHOUSE SB907WJ/SJ** is the most suitable for someone with cognitive impairment due to its one-touch start and comparatively few buttons.

■ For those in a wheelchair, a single seven-setting **FISHER & PAYKEL Dishdrawer** would be best.

An update on Whirlpool

In the Jan/Feb 2004 article we described how the energy efficiency scores for the **WHIRLPOOL 6ADP5540** and **6ADP5656WHM** didn't tally with their energy labels. The manufacturer told us that some machines were sold with the wrong dataset, which meant they were using at least 40% more energy than the energy label claimed. While the models were recalled from stores, **WHIRLPOOL** told us it wouldn't be instigating a public recall of machines that had already been sold. See the Jan/Feb 2004 issue of **CHOICE** for how to identify affected models.

We wrote to the ACCC and made it aware of this issue, and it's asked us to provide more details so it can investigate further. We'd like to see a public recall as the outcome, so that people who bought the affected models are made aware that their machines are probably using more energy than they're supposed to, and that they can have the dataset replaced to remedy the situation.

8 FEATURES		SPECIFICATIONS										COSTS	
	Height-adjustable top basket	Foldable / removable times	Anti-flood device	Concealed element	Dimensions (H x W x D, cm)	9 Water connection	Place settings	10 Type	Warranty (years)	Origin	Manufacturer / distributor	11 Running cost (\$ / 10 years)	Price (\$)**
✓			✓	✓	82 x 60 x 58	C rec	12	BI	2	Italy	Electrolux	800	1499
✓	F			✓	82 x 60 x 59	C rec	12	BI	2	Australia	Electrolux	774	999
✓	F			✓	82 x 60 x 59	C rec	12	BI	2	Australia	Electrolux	774	999
✓	F			✓	82 x 60 x 59	C rec	12	BI	2	Australia	Electrolux	774	1099
✓	F, R	✓		✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	FW, BI	2	Italy	Maytag	694	1099
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	FW, BI	2	Italy	Maytag	694	1299
✓	F	✓	✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	FW	3	Germany	Andi Co	774	1899
✓	F			✓	82 x 60 x 59	C rec	12	BI	2	Australia	Electrolux	768	899
✓	F			✓	82 x 60 x 59	C rec	12	BI	2	Australia	Electrolux	768	999
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	FW, BI	2	Germany	Whirlpool	476	1399
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	I	2	Germany	Whirlpool	476	1695
✓			✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	C rec	12	FW, BI	2	EU	Major Electrical Appliances	798	1299
✓			✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	C rec	12	I	2	EU	Major Electrical Appliances	798	1549
✓			✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	C rec	12	FW, BI	2	EU	Major Electrical Appliances	798	1599
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	14	FW, BI	2	Korea	LG	667	999
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	14	FW, BI	2	Korea	LG	667	1499
✓			✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	C rec	14	FW, BI	2	Germany	Bosch	774	1149
✓			✓	✓	85 x 60 x 60	C rec	14	BI	2	Germany	Bosch	774	1599
✓	F	✓	✓	✓	82 x 60 x 59	C rec	12	BI	2	Australia	Electrolux	894	1199
	R			✓	82 x 60 x 58 (A)	C rec	14 (A)	BI	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	953 (A)	1767 (A)
	R			✓	82 x 60 x 58 (A)	C rec	14 (A)	I	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	953 (A)	1830 (A)
	R			✓	82 x 60 x 58 (A)	C rec	14 (A)	BI	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	953 (A)	1894 (A)
	R		✓	✓	82 x 60 x 58 (A)	C rec	14 (A)	BI	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	953 (A)	1933 (A)
	R				83 x 60 x 56	C rec	12	BI	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	694	1020
	R				83 x 60 x 56	C rec	12	BI	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	694	1057
	R				83 x 60 x 56	C rec	12	BI	2	NZ	Fisher & Paykel	694	1599
				✓	82 x 60 x 55	H or C	14	BI	2	Sweden	Asko	538	1399
				✓	82 x 60 x 55	H or C	14	BI, I	2	Sweden	Asko	538	1549
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	82 x 60 x 57	H or C	14	FW, BI	5	France	Kleenmaid	753	2399
✓	F, R	✓	✓	✓	82 x 60 x 57	H or C	14	FW, BI	5	France	Kleenmaid	753	2599
				✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	FW, BI	2	Germany	Whirlpool	427	1279
				✓	85 x 60 x 60	H or C	12	FW, BI	2	Germany	Whirlpool	427	1399

Newly tested models.

Models linked by a square bracket are technically similar (see What to buy, page 44).

* 'Normal' or auto-sense cycle.

** Prices are recommended retail, as provided by manufacturers in December 2003/January 2004.

ss Stainless steel.

(A) Water and energy use, price, running costs, dimensions and place settings are for two Dishdrawers, to make results comparable with the other models. You can buy just a single drawer: models DS603, DS603 (ss), and DS603 (ww). Bk = black, I = integrated, m = iridium stainless steel, ss = stainless steel, ww = white.

(B) About to be discontinued, but you may still find it in shops.

1 Overall score

This is a combination of the following scores, weighted as follows:

- Washing performance: 30%
- Drying performance: 25%
- Ease of use: 15%
- Energy efficiency: 15%
- Water efficiency: 15%

2 to 7

See notes 2 to 7 with the table in CHOICE, Jan/Feb 2004, for information on what was tested and measured to achieve these scores. Or go to www.choiceextra.com.au and click on Jan/Feb 04 under 'dishwashers' in the index.



8 Features

See the Jan/Feb 2004 issue (or go to www.choiceextra.com.au) for more on the features listed in the table. 'R' means the tines are removable, 'F' that they can be folded down.

9 Water connection

H or C: You can connect the dishwasher to hot or cold water. C rec: The manufacturer recommends connection to a cold tap, and the dishwasher heats the water itself.

See the Jan/Feb 2004 article or go to www.choiceextra.com.au for the pros and cons of connecting to hot or cold water.



10 Types available

FW: Freestanding, with a worktop (can generally be built-in as well).

BI: Built-in (some mightn't have top or side panels).

I: Integrated — you can fit a front panel to match the rest of your kitchen cupboard doors.

11 Running costs

This is an estimate of how much it'll cost you to run the machine over 10 years for water and electricity if you run one full load every day using the 'normal' cycle. The calculations are based on 12.5 cents per kWh for electricity, and \$1 per 1000 l for water. To simplify it we haven't included depreciation or interest costs, nor the cost of detergent.

recalls& bans

Nowadays there are so many product recalls we may not be able to print all of them in CHOICE. For comprehensive recall information go to the Federal Treasury website: www.recalls.gov.au. If you don't have web access, call the **Consumer Safety Unit** on (02) 6263 2747.

Companies often rent 1800 numbers for a couple of months after a recall is announced. If the number given is no longer operating, phone the manufacturer or retailer direct.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENER: Merisant Australia has recalled **Equal Spoonful**, 40 g and 80 g glass jars, with best-before dates of Feb 2006 and Mar 2006. No other Equal products are affected.

The problem: Glass fragments have been found in some of the above batches.

What to do: Return the product to the place of purchase for a refund, or call 1300 306 120 for further information.

NUTCRACKER: Woolworths has recalled **Santa's Helper**, 30 cm nutcracker, four assorted.

The problem: The product contains a species of borer that's not known to occur in Australia.

What to do: While there's no known threat to consumer health or safety, wrap the product in plastic and return it to your nearest Woolworths or Safeway store for a refund, or call 1800 638 434 for more information.

FOOD: Golden Circle has recalled **Golden Circle Meal Variety 4 and 8 Pack Baby Food** in pink cardboard sleeves, "for six months plus" category. The four-pack contains 4 x 120 g cans, best before 11/11/06, and the eight-pack contains 8 x 120 g cans, best before 14 Mar 2006. The products were sold in all states except WA.

The problem: The outer sleeve indicates the products are dairy-free, but the Chicken and Vegetable variety contains skim milk powder, and could cause an allergic reaction in babies allergic or sensitive to milk protein.

What to do: Don't feed the product to a dairy-intolerant baby, and return it to the place of purchase for a refund. For more information call 1800 730 101.

FOOD: Azura Gelati has recalled **Azura Gelati Celebrate Ice Cream Cake**, sold in a 1.25 L plastic container in a pink cardboard box, with a use-by date of Dec 04, batch code 01003513, and sold in WA.

The problem: *E. coli* bacteria have been detected in the product.

What to do: Don't eat it. Return it to the place of purchase for a refund, or call (08) 9314 1656 for more information.

FOOD: Sanitarium has recalled **Sanitarium Rediburger**, 415 g, with product code NM 93317 on the base of the can, and sold in December 2003 and January 2004 in Victoria.

The problem: The can contains a nutmeat product that contains peanuts, and is incorrectly labelled as Rediburger.

What to do: Don't eat the product if you're allergic or sensitive to peanuts. Return it to the place of purchase for a refund or exchange, or for more information call 1800 673 392.

FOOD: Lowan has recalled **Lowan Whole Foods Coca Bombs**, 350 g packets, all best-before dates up to and including P 15 11 04.

The problem: The product contains milk protein and isn't labelled accordingly.

What to do: Don't eat it if you have a milk protein allergy or sensitivity. Return it to the place of purchase for a refund or call 1800 355 718 for more information.

DRINK BOTTLE: Macdonald Imports has recalled **Galaxy Sports Bottles**, branded **Trudeau** or **Home Presence**, and in the designs **Finding Nemo** and **Winnie the Pooh**. They were sold in Target stores, The Warehouse Group and other smaller retailers.

The problem: A section of the top of the product may break off if it's subjected to extreme treatment, and could create a choking hazard.

What to do: Call 1800 885 574 and leave your contact details and the name of the store where you bought the item. A prepaid envelope will be sent to you in which to return the item and obtain a refund.

BABY CLOTHES: Best & Less has recalled **Babies Zip Front Windier Jacket**, code 375089, sold in Best & Less in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania.

The problem: A number of jackets

have been found to have faulty stops at the top of the zip, which could allow the zip slider to detach and become an ingestion hazard.

What to do: Remove the jacket from the reach of young children, and return it to your nearest Best & Less store for a refund.

TOY: Austwide Wholesalers has recalled **Puzzle Park Barrel Clock and Blocks**, TY 2005B, barcode 9316341212080. It's a bucket-shaped barrel with a clock lid containing 36 building bricks and accessories, and was distributed through discount and variety stores nationally.

The problem: The toy has an incorrect age warning label, and doesn't meet the Australian toy standard.

It contains small parts that pose a choking risk to young children.

What to do: Remove it from the reach of young children. Return it to the place of purchase for a refund or call (08) 9455 3200 for more information.

TOY: Austwide Wholesalers has recalled a toy **Tammarine Turtle with Snake-shaped Mallet**, a multi-coloured turtle-shaped plastic tammarine that's approximately 22 cm long and 15 cm wide, with the barcode 9316341191996 and sold through discount and variety stores nationally.

The problem: The toy has an incorrect age warning label, and doesn't meet the Australian toy standard. If broken it could produce small parts that pose a choking risk to young children.

What to do: Remove it from the reach of young children. Return it to the place of purchase for a refund or call (08) 9455 3200 for more information.

TOY: Cosmic Imports has recalled the **Insect Phone**, with barcode 9331525004428, sold in NSW.

The problem: It doesn't meet the Australian toy standard, and if broken it could produce small parts that pose a choking risk to young children.

What to do: Remove the product from the reach of young children, and

return it to the place of purchase for a refund. For more information call (02) 9743 8484.

TOY: Cosmic Imports has recalled the **Musical Play Set**, with barcode 9331525001571, sold in NSW.

The problem: It doesn't meet the Australian toy standard, and if broken it could produce small parts that pose a choking risk to young children.

What to do: Remove the product from the reach of young children, and return it to the place of purchase for a refund. For more information call (02) 9743 8484.

STOVE LID: Glem Gas Appliances has recalled the **Emilia Glass Stove Top Lid** on the stainless steel upright cooker with glass fold-down lid, models EL664, EL865 and EL965.

The problem: The glass lid may shatter if burners are left on with the lid in the down position, or if a heavy object is dropped on the lid.

What to do: Remove the glass lid and call (02) 9756 0996 to arrange for rectification.

HAMMOCK: The Hammock Co has recalled **Universal and Mini-Universal Hammock Frames**, sold nationally between September 1, 2003, and December 5, 2003.

The problem: The wing nuts in the frames may be faulty, resulting in a risk of injury.

What to do: Don't use the hammock until the wing nuts have been replaced. To get the free replacement parts, contact the place of purchase or The Hammock Co on (02) 9560 0708, or email sales@hammockco.com.au.

DIVING EQUIPMENT: Scuba Futures has recalled **Sherwood Scuba BCDs**, models Silhouette, Magnum, Avid,

Luna and Freedom, purchased after July 1, 2003, with a serial number between 90010001 and 90350167. The power inflator valves within this serial number range have either a black or grey power inflator button.

The problem: The power inflator could provide continuous inflation and expose the diver to potential injury if appropriate measures aren't taken to operate the exhaust valve to control ascent.

What to do: Stop using the equipment immediately and contact your nearest Sherwood dealer for a free valve replacement, or call (02) 9686 3139 for more information.

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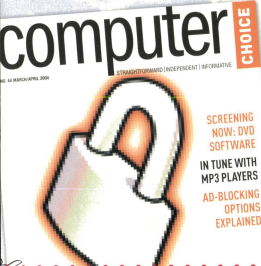
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index

HOW TO USE THIS INDEX

Bold type indicates a test, survey or trial report, normal type indicates other articles.

* indicates an update of a previous report, additions or corrections to reports, small follow-up items, letters or recalls. For space reasons, the index generally doesn't include Choice Cuts and other small pieces.

A ir conditioners, split-system Air quality, indoor	Oct Sep	Ethical manufacture jeans running shoes Ethical super	Jun, Oct* Jan/Feb Oct, Dec*	Hot water systems choosing gas instantaneous House and contents insurance	Oct Oct Jun	R eal estate agents Refrigerators — see Fridges Retirement villages Running shoes	Mar Sep Jan/Feb
B ackpacks, day Backphones Baldness treatments Bar fridges Bathroom cleaners Bed sheets Beer, premium Biscuits, choc chip Brandt steam oven Breakfast cereals	Jan/Feb Jul Jun, Dec* Jun Nov Sep Jun Nov Nov May	F at, refresher course and quiz Financial credit cards credit files ethical super haggling for money products saving for education	Mar Dec Jan/Feb, Apr* Oct, Dec* May May	I ndex, four-year Indoor air quality Induction cooktops Insurance ancillary health hospital house and contents travel Internet dial-up problems Investment, ethical	Jun Sep Aug Jun Jul Jun Nov Aug Oct, Dec*	S alad, prepacked Selling your home, DIY Set-top boxes Sheets Shoes, running Solardom oven (LG) Soup, pumpkin Soy Soy milk maker Sparkling wine and champagne "Sports" water Steam oven (Brandt) Strollers jogger layback Sunglasses Suncscreens Superannuation, ethical Supermarket prices	Dec Nov Apr Jun Jan/Feb Nov Jul Jun Dec Jan/Feb Nov Aug, Oct* Nov Oct, Dec* Jul
C amcorders, digital Cameras digital disposable/single-use Cars ethanol in petrol fuel and oil additives reader reviews tyres used car safety CDMA mobile phones Champagne and sparkling wine Child/baby concerns cots, portable high chairs jogger strollers layback strollers nappies saving for education Chips, potato Choc chip biscuits Cleaners bathroom Enjo products microfibre cloths oven Computer monitors, buying guide Conditioner Cooktops, induction Corporate social responsibility jeans running shoes Cosmetics, facts vs myths Cots, portable Credit cards, top 10 and buying guide Credit files Custard	Dec Oct, Jan/Feb* Jan/Feb May, Aug* Aug, Mar May Sep Dec May Oct Jan/Feb Aug Apr May Sep Nov Aug Aug May May Apr Aug May Dec Dec Apr Aug Jun, Oct* Jan/Feb Mar May Dec Jan/Feb, Apr* Dec Jan/Feb Jan/Feb Jan/Feb, Apr Jan/Feb Nov May Dec Dec Jan/Feb Oct, Jan/Feb* Jan/Feb Jan/Feb, Apr Jan/Feb Nov May Dec Dec Jan/Feb Jul, Sep*	G adgets, useless Garden hoses lawnmowers/mulchers, petrol Gas and electricity retailers, changing Gas instantaneous water heaters GI (glycaemic index) explained Grills, 'health' H aggling for money products Hair baldness treatments conditioner Hay fever treatments Headphones Health ancillary insurance buying medicines online echinacea hay fever treatments hospital insurance hospital, surviving prostheses costs soy suncscreens system, what's wrong? High chairs Home, selling, DIY Hoses, garden Hospital insurance Hospital, surviving	Apr Oct Oct Jan/Feb May Jan/Feb Dec Nov Jun May Apr Dec Nov Jul Oct Apr Oct Oct Oct Dec Jun Nov Jul Oct Nov Oct Jul Oct	M anufacture, ethical jeans running shoes Marmalade Medicines, buying online Microfibre cleaning cloths Mobile phones CDMA GSM Money — see Banks, Financial Monitors, computer, buying guide Mulcher mowers, petrol Multitools N appies O il and fuel additives Oven Brandt, steam cleaners LG Solardom Peanut butter Percentage labelling of food Personal care products, facts vs myths Pesticide residues in tea Petrol additives ethanol in Phones, mobile — see Mobile phones Pizza Plasma TV screens Portable cots Portable fridges Potato chips, wedges, shapes Premium beer Prostheses, costs Pumpkin soup	Jun, Oct* Jan/Feb Apr Mar Aug Nov Jul May May Jun Aug Apr May May Jun Aug Mar May Dec Sep Dec Sep Dec Jul	T ea, pesticide residues in Telephones — see Phones Television 51 cm 68 cm digital set-top boxes plasma screens Toasters Toothbrushes Travel insurance Tuna, tinned Tyres V acuum cleaners, cheap Video cameras, digital W ashing machines Water heaters choosing gas instantaneous Water, 'sports' Wills, making one Wine, sparkling and champagne	May Aug Nov Apr Mar Mar Sep Nov Jan/Feb May Jul Dec Sep, Nov*, Mar Oct Oct Jan/Feb Apr Dec

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Test



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Rubbadubbers is a high-spirited animated series about a group of bath toys who live in the tub. In each episode, the friendly toys open up a world of imagination and adventure for the kids.



TOY STORY

Rubbadubbers is a kids' TV show about the adventures of a bunch of bath toys. Now you're probably already thinking in terms of merchandising spin-offs, and probably along the lines of, oh, maybe some bath toys much like the Rubbadubbers? You're right, of course, about the merchandising spin-offs (what kids' show these days is without it?), and you could also be forgiven for assuming, like reader Jennifer Keyt, this plastic Terence figurine could be used in the bath ... as a bath toy. But the packaging warns us "Do not use in water".

Eh? It's plastic! It's a character known for being a bath toy! What gives? Silly as it sounds, HASBRO, the distributor, says because it's heavy and made of hard plastic, it poses a safety risk if it sinks to the bottom of the bath — the kid might not see it (especially if bubble bath is involved) and sit on it. Try explaining that to your four-year-old...



At least they're honest!

But would you buy a set?



Set only \$39.90 valued at \$18.10 PLUS RECEIVE A FREE SKINCARE BAG



FLAVOUR OF THE TIMES?

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE HELP?

YAY AND OOPS!

The winner of this month's book prize for best entry goes to Jennifer Keyt — congratulations!

In Jan/Feb *Hard Word* we pointed you to page 30 to order the *Hard Word* book, now \$10. However, as several readers have pointed out, it wasn't there ... or anywhere else in the magazine. Apologies for any inconvenience or hair-tearing angst caused — if you'd like to buy a copy, call our Consumer Services people toll-free on 1800 069 552.

The *Hard Word* would like to thank all the readers who've responded with examples of outrageous ads, promotions and products. Thanks to J Keyt, K George, D Horgan and V Murphy for their contributions to this month's *Hard Word*. Please keep them coming.

If you have any examples you think deserve to be on this page, send them to *The Hard Word*, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Road, Marrickville 2204, or email your suggestions to thehardword@choice.com.au.

A secret weapon against burning fat and keeping fit?

What are they advocating? Too much TV and junk food? Surely that's no secret?

Actually, it's a pedometer. Funny, though, we'd have thought a pedometer would work towards burning fat and keeping fit.

Your "Secret Weapon Against Burning Fat And Keeping Fit"



"The Total Re-Shape Talking Pedometer continues to inspire me each day to walk more. It has become a competition with myself, which is fun and is helping keep my figure even"